

TOWARD A *CONVIVENCIA*:  
JUAN PERON AND THE JEWS OF ARGENTINA, 1943-1949

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The coup of 4 June 1943, and the accompanying upsurge in antisemitic activity, initiated a period of crisis for Argentina's Jewish community; Juan Perón's subsequent transformation of Argentine politics created further difficulties. Using, primarily, newspaper sources from the Argentine Jewish community, the thesis analyzes the response of the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) to the issues of antisemitism, Jewish immigration, and Peronism.

Encouraged by the June coup, Nationalist thugs began a campaign of antisemitic violence. Little effort was made to suppress this activity by a government which itself was strongly influenced by Argentine Nationalism: by October 1943 two ultranationalists occupied cabinet posts, and a third, Col. Filomeno Velazco, later became Buenos Aires Police Chief. In calling for greater government assistance for its own efforts against the antisemitic campaign, the Jewish community, under the leadership of the DAIA's Moisés Goldman and Ricardo Dubrovsky, levelled criticism delicately. At the same time, as awareness grew of the tragedy in Europe, Argentine Jewry lobbied for higher Jewish immigration.

In late 1945, Peronist politics began to create new pressures on Argentine Jewry. As forces within the community strongly opposed Perón's bid for the presidency, the DAIA worked hard to maintain Jewish political neutrality. Perón's February 1946 victory did not end antisemitic violence; yet the DAIA developed a cordial relationship with Perón, who slowly isolated his government's most extreme Nationalists. While the Jewish leadership lost patience with Police Chief Velazco, the only government official whom the community openly attacked was Santiago Peralta, the antisemitic Director of Immigration. By mid 1947 Peralta and Velazco had been ousted. Though their departure owed more to Perón's efforts to improve relations with the United States, the Jewish leadership was pleased. The

establishment of the State of Israel offset an immigration policy which still did not welcome Jews to Argentina. More importantly, the antisemitic campaign died down after 1947.

Argentina's Jews, however, still faced a challenge in the populist rule of Perón. Perón did not use the Peronist Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA) to co-opt the community, but rather to facilitate open cordiality and the exchange of favours. The DAIA's own efforts to please the president may have protected community "interests" but they did not represent general Jewish opinion which, the evidence suggests, did not support Perón.

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## INTRODUCTION

Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, in their story "La fiesta del Monstruo," describe a mob of uncultured political fanatics making their way to a rally where their leader, *el Monstruo*, will speak. Unruly from the start, the men become angry and violent when a Jewish student, who accidentally steps into their path, refuses to show *el Monstruo* due respect. The group attacks the unfortunate Jew, stones him to death, and, as a final affront, strips his body of anything valuable before hurrying off to the Plaza de Mayo where their leader is to address the nation.<sup>1</sup> Set in 1947, "La fiesta del Monstruo" can be interpreted as a fictionalized representation of the extremism of Juan Perón's Nationalist supporters.<sup>2</sup>

The crudity of the sketch typifies the popular understanding of Perón's relationship with Argentina's Jews. Perón's opponents readily manipulated the Jewish question as part of their political program: they distorted the facts, hastily and erroneously characterizing Perón as an antisemite. In this undertaking they found North American allies: U.S. efforts to neutralize Perón by portraying Argentina as a "Nazi menace" culminated in the State Department's publication in 1946 of the "*Blue Book*," which purported to show the country's links with the Axis.<sup>3</sup> In Chapter One, with a critical survey of the literature describing Perón's relationship with Argentina's Jews, I begin the task of drawing an accurate picture from the proliferation of hasty, politically-motivated writing.

Despite its hyperbole, "La fiesta del Monstruo" is not wholly divorced from reality. In the 1940s Nationalist supporters of Perón *did* behave abominably toward Argentina's Jewish community. Synagogues were defaced, antisemitic graffiti appeared throughout Buenos Aires, and individual Jews were repeatedly taunted and provoked. Moreover, such attacks took place, as in Borges' story, in a political context. Allegations that the Jewish community opposed Perón strengthened the resolve of his Nationalist supporters whose ideology had long seen the "Jew" as an enemy. Not all Peronists were antisemitic, but an influential minority certainly was. Significantly, even as Perón dissociated himself from the Nationalist

street violence which plagued Argentina's Jewish community, he was slow to purge his government of several ultranationalists, among them the Buenos Aires Police Chief and the Director of Immigration. In his early years in power, Perón was reluctant to cut ties with his antisemitic supporters for fear of jeopardizing his own power base. How, then, did Argentina's Jewish leadership combat a campaign of antisemitism without alienating the president? With the United States quick to charge the Argentine regime with supporting antisemitism, how did relations between the two countries affect the situation of Argentina's Jews? Answers to these questions emerge in my analysis, in Chapter Two, of Jewish efforts to combat antisemitism.

Along with antisemitism, Jewish immigration was a vital concern for the community, both during the war and in the immediate postwar period. With Argentine neutrality reinforced by the 4 June 1943 coup, Argentina was in a favourable position to negotiate with Nazi Germany for the passage of Jewish refugees. But what concern for the fate of European Jews could have been expected from a "revolutionary" government tainted by antisemitism? Jewish calls for increased immigration certainly went unheeded by Argentina's blatantly antisemitic Director of Immigration, Santiago Peralta. Even after Peralta's dismissal, could Argentina reconcile its immigration policy, which discriminated against Jewish refugees, with Perón's call for massive immigration? I examine these questions in Chapter Three.

Finally, how could the Jewish community hope to isolate itself from the passionate emotions that politicized and polarized Perón's Argentina? As the centre of the controversy over the antisemitic nature of Peronism, Jewish Argentina was under great pressure. Did the Jews resist inclusion in Perón's mass movement, or did they cooperate and somehow compromise themselves? In Chapter Four I examine the effects of Peronism on the community.

Neutral for most of the Second World War, Argentina found itself in the mid 1940s overtaken by the worker-based populist movement of Juan Perón. While Peronism helped transform Argentine society, it also helped lay the foundation for the violent civil conflicts of subsequent decades--conflicts in which the

country's Jews were increasingly victimized. The study of Argentina's Jews under Perón illustrates the particular vulnerability of the Jewish community in times of social and political crisis.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE JEWS OF PERON'S ARGENTINA: DEMOGRAPHY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Argentina's Jewish community numbered approximately 280,000 when Juan Perón won the country's presidency in 1946. Massive immigration between 1905 and 1940 had transformed Argentina's Jewish population from its modest origins in the late 19th century to its postwar position as one of the largest communities in the Diaspora.<sup>1</sup> Demographic consolidation also brought cultural diversity: a basic division between the Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities was hardened by the "secular-cultural" tendencies of the former and the more religious character of the latter. Furthermore, the Ashkenazim spoke Yiddish which the Sephardim did not understand.<sup>2</sup> Within the two principal communities there existed still further divisions based on country of origin: Sephardic communities grew out of emigrants from North Africa, Aleppo, Damascus, and Ladino speakers from Turkey and the Balkans;<sup>3</sup> among the Ashkenazim, tensions often developed between Jews of German origin and those from Russia and Poland.<sup>4</sup> Yet certain forces did manage to overcome such diversity. Jews of all backgrounds supported (and gave money toward) the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>5</sup> As well, unity was fostered by the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) the umbrella organization which represented Jewish Argentina before government authorities and international Jewish bodies.<sup>6</sup> Organizational solidarity was necessary since such issues as antisemitism and Jewish immigration affected the entire community. Perceived as homogeneous by the country's gentiles, Argentina's Jews believed themselves obliged to speak with one voice.

Two demographic features of the larger Argentine polity found exaggerated expression in the Jewish community. Firstly, Jewish population growth far outstripped that of the general population in the three decades before Perón's victory. While immigration caused Argentina's population to double to almost 16 million between the national censuses of 1914 and 1947, the country's Jewish inhabitants increased by

140% in the same period.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, in addition to rapid growth, significant concentration in the capital characterized Argentine demography; the 1947 census showed almost one third of Argentines residing in the metropolitan area of Greater Buenos Aires. While Jews lived in every province of the country, a full three quarters were concentrated in the federal capital district.<sup>8</sup> Representing less than 2% of the country's population, Jews accounted for 5% of Buenos Aires' inhabitants on the eve of Perón's assumption of power.<sup>9</sup>

Jewish concentration in Buenos Aires accompanied larger societal changes through the 1930s and 1940s which found their most pronounced expression in the Argentine capital. Expanding industrialization saw a decline in the influence of the rural elite as workers and the middle class grew in size and gained a greater role in Argentine society. Changes in the ethnic composition of Buenos Aires accompanied this transformation: as Argentine creoles migrating from the interior swelled the ranks of the capital's working class, increasing numbers of immigrants moved into the middle and even upper economic classes.<sup>10</sup> The declining elite and those who looked to an older, "traditional" Argentine order clearly resented these changes, which came to a head under Perón. In part, the changes are responsible for Perón's success--he tapped into the previously unrecognized potential of the workers and made it his movement's most stable foundation. At the same time, frustration with the rapid societal transformations made Argentine creoles more susceptible to a Nationalist ideology which blamed immigrants for the disruptions occasioned by the changes. Argentina's large Jewish community--with its concentration in Buenos Aires, and strong representation among the new industrialists, the leftist intelligentsia, and the professional classes--became an obvious target of hostility.<sup>11</sup> The new social realities easily reinforced Argentine Nationalism which, from its birth, had embraced antisemitism.<sup>12</sup> Vulnerable to the growth of antisemitic Nationalism, Argentina's Jewish population faced a still greater challenge in the changes Perón forced on the nation.

Quite simply, Peronism created a new Argentine reality. Studying this "Argentina transformed" is complicated by Peronism's continued importance as a political force even after Perón's ouster in 1955. The

rift Perón created in Argentine society widened during his years in exile; it polarized the country, forcing many people to side openly with Peronists or anti-Peronists. Not surprisingly, this polarization dominates the historiography of the period. Of the countless books and articles on Perón,<sup>13</sup> very few even attempt to be impartial; most analysts, comfortably confirmed in their judgment of Perón's rule, make no effort to hide their opinion.

In the first years after the 1943 "revolution" very few U.S. journalists and academics looked favourably on Perón and the young Argentine regime. Critics were particularly harsh while Argentina maintained relations with the Axis powers, but the barrage of accusations did not let up even after the break of January 1944. Ysabel Rennie, in her 1945 history of Argentina, saw Perón's ascension as marking the end of a period of liberalism which had lasted almost 100 years and a return to the despotism of the 19th century dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas.<sup>14</sup> Assessments of the Jewish community's relationship with Perón invariably agreed with Rennie's position.

The tone was set by U.S. journalist Ray Josephs who, in the early 1940s, worked as a columnist for the *Buenos Aires Herald* while also serving as Latin American correspondent for such U.S. newspapers as the *Washington Post*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Chicago Sun*.<sup>15</sup> Josephs published his *Argentine Diary* in 1944 on his return from a one year stint in Argentina. Subtitled "The Inside Story of the Coming of Fascism," the book characterized Perón as a dangerous opportunist who was the real head of the Argentine junta; Josephs saw the distinction between nominal presidents Ramírez and Farrell as the "difference between Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum."<sup>16</sup> With his credentials established, Josephs wrote a series of articles for the New York-based *National Jewish Monthly* in which he highlighted the danger Perón represented and downplayed any overtures the leader made to Argentina's Jewish citizens. In November 1946 Josephs wrote that "Jew-baiting is employed when Perón feels it desirable, diminished when not propitious."<sup>17</sup> Two years later, Josephs still did not trust the Argentine president--though the

situation of Argentina's Jews might then have appeared stable, Perón could move against them at any moment.<sup>18</sup>

Josephs was certainly not alone in labelling Perón and his government antisemitic. Reports on Argentina in the *American Jewish Yearbook* from 1945 through 1947, while not condemning Perón outright, were decidedly pessimistic with regard to the situation of Jews in Argentina.<sup>19</sup> Articles in *The Nation* and the *New York Times* linked Perón with antisemitic violence. Arnaldo Cortesi, the latter newspaper's correspondent in Buenos Aires, was in fact a confederate of U.S. Ambassador Braden (one of Perón's most vocal critics), who used the reporter to have his own version of the truth in Argentina imposed on the U.S. public.<sup>20</sup> The *New York Times* voiced its harshest criticism of Perón in late 1945 in the midst of Braden's smear campaign. A 26 November editorial opined: "What an apt pupil [Perón] is proving of the Nazi criminals who now stand in the prisoners' dock at Nuremberg."<sup>21</sup> Although Braden failed in his attempts to topple Perón, his characterization of the Argentine as a fascist threat was not so quickly dispelled. Robert Alexander, in his influential 1951 treatment of the Perón era, saw Perón's totalitarian regime as a serious challenge to democracy in the western hemisphere.<sup>22</sup>

Despite such characterizations, U.S. criticism of Perón was not unanimous. By the late 1940s the view of many had changed. Two histories are worthy of note: in his 1953 work *Perón's Argentina*, George Blanksten criticized the president but acknowledged the leader's disavowal of antisemitism after 1945; a decade later Arthur Whitaker credited Perón with improving the life of the Argentine worker while faulting him for most other aspects of his rule, including the "xenophobe character of his nationalism."<sup>23</sup> While maintaining the position established by Rennie and Josephs, Blanksten and Whitaker at least excised from orthodox U.S. opinion its more sensationalistic elements. *American Jewish Yearbook* reports in 1949 and 1950 acknowledged problems faced by Argentina's Jewish community, but found little fault with Perón.<sup>24</sup> By mid 1947, following the improvement in U.S.-Argentine relations achieved by U.S. Ambassador George Messersmith, the *New York Times* had long forgotten the problems faced by Jewish

Argentina. By year's end the newspaper's judgment of Perón had changed to such an extent that it could conclude: "both internationally and domestically he is being credited with bringing the nation to the threshold of the greatest era it has ever known."<sup>25</sup> Still, the determined critics did not disappear entirely. A year after Perón's ouster, the Israeli journalist David Ben-Mordechay Bligh wrote that "concealing their fear behind the stereotypical smile expected by the Peronists, the Jews of Argentina constantly awaited further outbursts of anti-Semitism and even of slaughter."<sup>26</sup>

Perón's exile brought profound changes to the Peronist movement as sympathizers struggled to navigate the maze of Argentine politics. Reflecting on their decade in power, Peronists undertook the task of writing their history of the experience. Ignoring the shortcomings and failures of Perón's rule, these histories lauded their leader whose forced exile served to enhance his image.<sup>27</sup> A valuable source book, Juan José Sebreli's 1968 compilation *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* is also specific in its purpose--to characterize Argentine liberals and Nationalists as sharing much common ground in their views of race in general and Jews in particular and to paint Peronism as the only force of salvation for Argentina's Jews.<sup>28</sup> Sebreli, in his concluding essay, asserts that only under Perón did Jews in Argentina achieve political and social equality; he argues that for the first time in Argentine history, individual Jews entered the diplomatic corps, the judiciary, and the public administration.<sup>29</sup> If the Jewish community did experience problems with Peronism it was as members of the middle class and not because of their religion.<sup>30</sup> To Sebreli, whose credentials as a Peronist are well established,<sup>31</sup> progress for the Jews of Argentina lay in a reorientation away from the middle class and the liberal antisemitism it engendered, and toward an alliance with the working class who would triumph through the social justice offered by Peronism.<sup>32</sup> With strong political motivations, Sebreli touted Perón as Jewish Argentina's natural ally.

Sebreli's assertions are mirrored by Emilio J. Corbière in his 1988 *Todo es Historia* article "Perón y los judíos."<sup>33</sup> Repeating Sebreli's contention that numerous Jews were closely associated with the president, Corbière includes several photographs confirming these relationships.<sup>34</sup> The author uses Perón's



greetings to the community on the Jewish New Year and his inclusion in the 1949 constitution of a clause against discrimination and racism, as evidence of the president's beneficence toward Argentina's Jews.<sup>35</sup> As part of their own political manoeuvring, liberal forces have incorrectly portrayed Perón as an antisemitic fascist.<sup>36</sup> Yet both Corbière and Sebreli display a similar shortsightedness: they present only those facts which lead to conclusions in accordance with their politics. While Sebreli acknowledges that certain antisemitic elements surfaced in the government on the heels of the 4 June coup,<sup>37</sup> he does not consider Perón's involvement with these forces; the Jewish community erred in perceiving Perón as antisemitic, in keeping with liberal characterizations of him as such.<sup>38</sup> Sebreli and Corbière indeed help to dispel the exaggerated charges of Perón's harshest critics, who saw little separating him from the Nazis, but their analyses are superficial and fail to explore Perón's connections to his antisemitic Nationalist supporters. Though true to a degree, Sebreli's assertion that Jewish Argentina opposed Perón through shortsightedness is overly simplistic. Both Corbière and Sebreli fail to ask the questions (Such as, why did Perón never win Jewish electoral support?) which would point beyond the merely circumstantial evidence of Perón's amiable relationship with Argentina's Jews.

Even the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), the representative body of Argentine Jewry, has tended to gloss over details of the relationship between Perón and the Jewish community. In a slim volume published in 1954 and entitled *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío*, the DAIA gathers together a collection of Perón's statements to Argentina's Jews. The DAIA writes in the introduction to the homage that it

*ha creído el máximo interés reunir en volumen esas palabras que resumen el pensamiento argentino por boca del Primer Magistrado. Grabadas en el libro han de servir de guía y estímulo, de pauta para impedir que se introduzcan artificialmente en el país odios que le son extraños.*<sup>39</sup>

The DAIA publication heaps praise on the president and portrays him as a staunch supporter of the Jewish community. Considerably less glowing in its exaltation of Perón, though hardly more critical, is "DAIA:

Medio siglo de lucha por una Argentina sin discriminaciones"--a supplement to the October 1985 issue of *Todo es Historia*. Once again, Perón's good words to the community and his inclusion of a clause against discrimination in the 1949 constitution are held up as evidence of his general amity towards the country's Jews. The anonymous author(s), however, do not acknowledge the connection between President Perón himself and the antisemitic incidents which occurred during his rule.<sup>40</sup>

The propaganda of Perón's harshest U.S. critics faded with the U.S.-Argentine reconciliation of the late 1940s and the forced retreat of Spruille Braden in light of new Cold War priorities. For the most part, the image of Perón that surfaced in the years following his 1955 ouster was one of a president working in harmony with his country's Jewish population. Only recently have attempts been made to investigate critically the actual nature of Perón's relationship with Argentina's Jewish community. While these studies show the charges of Perón's early U.S. critics to have been outlandish, they refrain from the politically-motivated apologetics offered by Sebreli and Corbière.

The most important scholarly research into Argentina's Jewish community under the presidency of Juan Perón has been undertaken by Leonardo Senkman and Ignacio Klich. Haim Avni has also touched on the period as part of a more general study of Argentina's Jewish population. Previous to their research, the only serious effort to understand the relationship between Perón and the Jews of Argentina is K.J. Riegner's short 1955 article "Argentina's Jewry Under Perón." Riegner writes persuasively that Perón was not antisemitic and even attempted to foster good relations with the Jewish community. At the same time, he posits that Argentina's Jews "fundamentally" rejected Perón because they sensed the *potential* danger that he represented. Riegner also views the DAIA as having successfully resisted attempts by Perón to co-opt the community through the Peronist Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA).<sup>41</sup> While Riegner does not touch on Nationalist antisemitism under Perón's rule or its connection with the president, his perspicacity is exemplary for historians writing in the 1950s. Though far less detailed, Victor Mirelman also makes cursory attempts at a balanced picture of Perón and the Jewish community in his 1975 "Attitudes Toward

Jews in Argentina," acknowledging a certain inconclusiveness in Perón's action on Jewish matters.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Haim Avni's "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns,"--published in the journal *Dispersion and Unity* in the early 1970s<sup>43</sup>--points out Perón's early dalliance with antisemitic elements followed by his later strategic realignment.<sup>44</sup> Avni asserts that Perón's influence on the Jewish community through the OIA demands further research.<sup>45</sup> In his history of Jewish immigration to Argentina, *Argentina and the Jews*, the same author details Argentine immigration policy under Perón, showing it to have discriminated against Jewish immigrants. Ironically, he finds Perón to have maintained relatively good relations with the country's Jewish population.<sup>46</sup>

Avni's study of Jewish immigration to Argentina is continued in Leonardo Senkman's detailed research, which covers the period of the Second World War and the early years of Perón's rule.<sup>47</sup> Senkman shows Perón's massive postwar immigrant recruitment campaign to have discriminated against Jews; despite the president's disavowal of all forms of discrimination, selective immigration which favoured Spaniards and Italians continued even with the dismissal of the president's antisemitic Director of Immigration, Santiago Peralta.<sup>48</sup> During the years of U.S. hostility toward Perón and Argentina, the South American country was considered a haven for Nazi refugees. However, with the reconciliation between the two countries in the face of the emerging Cold War, the U.S. allowed Argentina full autonomy to do as it wished in the area of immigration. Argentina was permitted to take in "dangerous" people, and no pressure was applied to accept Jewish Holocaust survivors.<sup>49</sup> The study of Jewish immigration to Argentina under Perón is quite thorough: Avni and Senkman have amassed a wealth of data, and Senkman in particular has brought to light a detailed picture of Argentine immigration policy under Perón. What fails to emerge, however, is an evaluation of the actions of Argentina's Jewish leadership in the face of this immigration policy.<sup>50</sup> All struggles to improve the country's immigration record must be measured beside a concern which was of greater import to the community--antisemitic violence. The prevalence and immediate danger

of antisemitism, along with other postwar developments, rendered Jewish immigration a lesser priority to the Jewish leadership. This is explored below in Chapter Three.

Senkman begins a study of antisemitic violence by Nationalist groups following the coup of 4 June 1943 in his 1983 piece "El 4 de junio de 1943 y los judíos." Yet his examination is woefully incomplete. It amounts to a partial enumeration of incidents and fails to analyze moves by the Jewish leadership to deal with their concerns. Senkman concentrates on the early years of Perón's rise and does not note changes in the leader's policy following his assumption of the presidency.<sup>51</sup> As charges of antisemitism amounted to some of the most dangerous ammunition launched by Perón's critics, both inside and outside Argentina,<sup>52</sup> it is surprising that no detailed examination of Nationalist-perpetrated antisemitic violence following the 4 June coup has yet emerged<sup>53</sup>--I endeavour to fill this gap in Chapter Two. It is important to realize that external factors came to bear on the progress of the Jewish community's efforts to halt the outbreak of antisemitic violence. In "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," Ignacio Klich sees reports in the U.S. press charging Perón with antisemitism as hindering the president's ability to move against certain of his Nationalist supporters.<sup>54</sup> Klich's assertion that Perón perceived the situation of Argentina's Jewish community as fundamental to his rapprochement with the U.S. is not backed up by any solid evidence. Perón was indeed sensitive to misrepresentations of his treatment of Jews in the U.S. press, but he did not make any direct overtures to Argentine Jewry until *after* reconciliation with the U.S. in mid 1947. Klich is correct, however, to link reconciliation with the U.S. to Perón's offensive against the most extreme, and antisemitic, Nationalists.<sup>55</sup>

An attempt to provide a theoretical understanding of antisemitism is undertaken by the sociologist Gino Germani in his much-cited essay, "Antisemitismo ideológico y antisemitismo tradicional." Germani defines two varieties of anti-Jewish racism: "traditional" antisemitism involves the "*aceptación pasiva de ciertos estereotipos que son bastante comunes en el grupo en que uno vive,*" and affects the lower strata of Argentine society; "ideological" antisemitism is "*mucho mas precisa y elaborada*" and characterizes the

racist opinion within the middle and upper classes.<sup>56</sup> The latter, though less common than the former, can pose a greater danger to society since it more readily translates into action. The possibility that ideological antisemites might take advantage of the large numbers of lower class antisemites is cause for further concern.<sup>57</sup> Carlos Waisman, providing the historical context for Germani's hypothesis, argues that the social disruption caused in Argentina by increasing industrialization in the 1930s and 1940s created a greater receptivity to anti-Jewish sentiments.<sup>58</sup> Argentine Nationalist thought, in which ideological antisemitism had always been prominent, first began to reach the middle and lower classes, albeit in a "*forma diluida*," during the period of Perón's rule.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to antisemitism and immigration, the third important factor in evaluating the relationship between Jewish Argentina and Juan Perón is the president's supposed attempts to co-opt the community through the Peronist OIA. I have already mentioned K. J. Riegner's conclusion that the DAIA successfully resisted attempts by the OIA to control the community. In "El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí en Buenos Aires," Leonardo Senkman agrees with Riegner to a certain extent; concentrating on sources from the Israeli diplomatic mission in Buenos Aires from 1949, Senkman concludes that the OIA never amounted to much more than a forum for Perón's anti-racist and pro-Israel messages.<sup>60</sup> Senkman's study is quite detailed, yet once again lacks a perspective on the OIA from within Argentina's Jewish community. This I provide in Chapter Four.

In general, it must be said that in spite of the wealth of research on both Perón's Argentina and the country's Jewish community there is a dearth of material on the relationship between Argentina's Jews and Perón. In contrast with other periods, accounts of the Perón years have not emerged from within Jewish Argentina itself.<sup>61</sup> That the community seriously compromised itself and wishes the "truth" to remain hidden is not supported by the evidence.<sup>62</sup> The Zionist fervour of the immediate postwar years and the preoccupation with the young State of Israel certainly played important roles in refocussing the community on a point outside of Argentina. It is also possible that the division created in the country by Peronism has

made many reluctant to criticize the actions of Perón. The evidence indeed suggests that the amiable relations Perón cultivated with the Jewish community did little to dispel the mistrust individual Jews felt toward him.

With Peronism continuing to flourish as a political force through the 1960s and into the early 1970s, Perón's Jewish Argentine critics remained silent. The *Guerra Sucia* brought Jewish Argentina a far graver crisis. A shrinking population and a general decline in community cohesiveness,<sup>63</sup> coupled with the time passed since the first period of Perón's rule, have lessened the likelihood that voices from the community will be heard. Today, the popular president of the *Peronista* government is facing criticism for his inaction following a large terrorist attack against the Argentine Jewish community.<sup>64</sup> A better understanding of Argentina's Jews under Juan Perón can offer valuable insights into these subsequent developments in the country's Jewish community.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FIGHTING NATIONALIST ANTISEMITISM

The coup of 4 June 1943 which ousted President Ramón Castillo stemmed primarily from the military's reluctance to once again condone the electoral fraud which had characterized the period of Argentine history now known as the *década infame*: Castillo's hand-picked successor, Robustiano Patrón-Costas, was seen as an opportunistic profiteer and lacked any popular support. Opposition to Castillo and Patrón-Costas was strong enough to momentarily unite a disparate group of officers encompassing a variety of opinion on both foreign and domestic policy.<sup>1</sup> Despite Patrón-Costas' British links, many foreign observers felt the new regime, still neutral in the European conflict, would adopt a more pro-Allied foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, one faction within the military government sought closer ties with the United States in order to acquire arms from the North American power.<sup>3</sup> A second faction, the Argentine Nationalists, favoured continued neutrality. At the centre of this group were members, Juan Perón prominent among them, of a secret lodge of officers known as the Grupo de Oficiales Unidos (GOU). With the replacement of nominal coup leader General Arturo Rawson by General Pedro Pablo Ramírez on 6 June, the Nationalists, particularly certain GOU members, gained an early victory in the internal squabbling which plagued the 4 June regime.<sup>4</sup> When, by September, the pro-Allied faction failed to secure weapons from the U.S., which refused to end its arms embargo as long as Argentina maintained its neutrality, Nationalist forces within the junta gained the upper hand.<sup>5</sup> Effectively, the 4 June coup did not change Argentine foreign policy. Domestically, although some officers had felt army intervention necessary to prepare the country for truly popular elections after more than a decade of minority rule, Nationalists disdained democracy and favoured an authoritarian government in their vision of Argentine society.<sup>6</sup>

While Argentine Nationalist ideology had begun to develop as early as the 1880s, it did not become a viable political force until after the First World War when increased labour strife, combined with tensions

over immigration, created a social crisis in Argentina.<sup>7</sup> In January 1919 economic depression set off a general strike in Buenos Aires which quickly escalated into widespread fear, in the minds of the middle and upper classes, of an imminent communist revolution--antisemitism was linked to this fear. In the ensuing *Semana Trágica*, as the army crushed the violent strikers, Argentine "patriotic" citizens targeted Jews, many of Russian origin, whom they readily saw as communist activists: vigilantes attacked Jewish neighbourhoods killing at least one person, and injuring seventy-one others.<sup>8</sup> In the 1930s, Argentine antisemitism did not manifest itself as violently as it had in 1919,<sup>9</sup> though a proliferation of antisemitic materials during the decade described the encroachment by Jewish immigrants on "Argentine" institutions and associated them with worldwide communist and capitalist conspiracies.<sup>10</sup> This antisemitism figured prominently in a Nationalist ideology that found many disciples among the officers of the 4 June coup.

Following the coup, Argentina's Jewish community, particularly sensitive to the racist excesses of Argentine Nationalism,<sup>11</sup> as well as the possible whims of a government on friendly terms with Nazi Germany, chose to keep a low profile. The Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas (DAIA), an umbrella organization representing the majority of the country's Jewish associations, quickly postponed the pending "*Mes de Recordación*," which was to have run from the third week of June until the third week of July, and would have included at least one large, public assembly of protest in response to the tragedy unfolding in Europe. While the weekly *Mundo Israelita* avoided explicit reference to the coup, it clearly acknowledged the new state of affairs in its allusion to "*circunstancias que son del dominio público*." The "*Mes de Recordación*" would be observed when the DAIA could be certain that it would face "*ninguna dificultad o restricción*."<sup>12</sup>

Growing out of the Comité Contra el Antisemitismo, the DAIA was established in 1935. With the struggle against Argentine antisemitism constituting the body's most important work,<sup>13</sup> the DAIA represented Jewish Argentina before both the government and the general Argentine population.<sup>14</sup> Following the events of June 1943, the DAIA moved quickly to establish relations with Argentina's new



leaders. On 21 June, DAIA President Moisés Goldman, along with the organization's second vice-president, visited the new Buenos Aires police chief, Colonel Emilio Ramírez, to extend their formal greetings and inform him of the Jewish community's activities in the capital and in the interior. Ramírez assured them that the new government stood for order and justice without discrimination.<sup>15</sup> Three weeks later, on 13 July, the DAIA further extended its contact with the new government; a delegation led by Goldman met with the country's new Minister of the Interior, General Alberto Gilbert. The encounter was, as usual, cordial in all respects. Extending greetings to the minister, Goldman informed him that the Jewish community was disposed to help the government in its endeavours. He spoke of the contributions Jews had made to Argentina and stressed the strong Argentine identity felt by the country's Jewish citizens. Beyond the obvious danger that antisemitism meant for Jews, the racist ideology would damage the social and economic order of the country. General Gilbert assured the DAIA delegation that the national government would safeguard the legitimate rights of all its citizens without any form of discrimination.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the minister's assurances, Argentine Jewry would face a series of discriminatory actions undertaken by purported upholders of the 4 June "revolution." These actions would include restrictions on the preparation of kosher meat, the closing of the country's Yiddish language press, a ban on the use of Yiddish in public gatherings, the firing of Jewish teachers in the province of Entre Ríos, and the imposition of mandatory Catholic instruction in the country's schools. The Jewish community was also attacked by a variety of antisemitic Nationalist groups. Jewish defense options were severely limited by the fact that perpetrators of such attacks usually claimed to represent the 4 June revolution. To preserve the best interests of the community, the leadership criticized discriminatory practices--yet they did so with the understanding that excessive hostility might raise doubts of "Jewish" loyalty to the government or to the values of the 4 June revolution. With a variety of opinion within the regime on both domestic and foreign policy, the "values" of the revolution were anything but clear.<sup>17</sup> To further complicate matters, from mid October 1943 two antisemitic, reactionary Nationalists were in the cabinet: Dr. Gustavo Martínez Zuviría,

who had authored blatantly antisemitic tracts under the pseudonym "Hugo Wast", as the Minister of Justice and Public Instruction; and General Luis Perlinger as the Minister of the Interior.<sup>18</sup> The Jewish leadership was faced with a delicate task.

As a result, government measures which directly affected Jewish concerns could be attributed to government "error." The DAIA employed this tactic in its response to the government's closing of Argentina's Yiddish language press in October 1943. After leaving a note with Interior Minister Gilbert, the DAIA met with the minister and accepted both his assurance that the measure would be repealed immediately and his claim that the government had "erred" in acting against the Yiddish press.<sup>19</sup> The Jewish leadership accepted the same excuse for the prohibition of the kosher slaughter of animals in the province of Entre Ríos. The DAIA's Goldman travelled to Entre Ríos where he explained to provincial authorities the importance of ritual slaughter, pointing out how its prohibition violated constitutional guarantees and clashed with Argentine tradition. Goldman's efforts secured the measure's repeal. A *Mundo Israelita* editorial lauded the result, stating that "*nadie podía dudar de que la orden de suspender el sacrificio ritual solo se debía a un error.*"<sup>20</sup> This position was in keeping with Jewish assertions that discrimination, when not attributable to foreign elements, was due to ignorance. Thus intolerance might be rectified through education.

In general, the U.S. press and leadership was quick to react to any evidence of antisemitism in the young Argentine regime. The closing of the Yiddish press prompted President Roosevelt to criticize the Ramírez government's action sternly. The order's repeal the same day owed more to Roosevelt's words than to the complaints of the DAIA.<sup>21</sup> Still, critics from the U.S often voiced greater concern over antisemitism in Argentina than the Argentine Jewish leadership deemed necessary. When summoned by American reporters in early July 1944, Argentina's ambassador in Washington was quick to refute the "perceived" antisemitic policies of his government. A *Mundo Israelita* editorial supported the ambassador's contentions: antisemitism in Argentina was propagated by so-called "nationalists" who

identified themselves with the revolution, but were actually at the service of "foreign ideologies." In spite of the doubts of some, "*no hay motivos para creer que el actual gobierno... se aleje de la verdadera tradición argentina.*"<sup>22</sup> And the true Argentine tradition stood for religious freedom in the face of racist opposition.

The DAIA, however, remained busy through 1944 and 1945 dealing with a variety of government measures that infringed on the rights of Argentina's Jewish citizens. In late winter 1944 the DAIA had to move for the re-instatement of 120 Jewish teachers wrongfully dismissed in the province of Entre Ríos. Though the central government rectified the matter, the Jewish leadership was keenly aware of certain hostile elements within the government claiming to act in the spirit of the 4 June revolution.<sup>23</sup> In March 1945 *Mundo Israelita* praised government efforts to root out the "Nazi" elements attempting to cling to it,<sup>24</sup> but less than two months later the regime would invoke a ban on the use of all non-national (non-Spanish) languages in public gatherings. The ban particularly affected a segment of the Jewish community which commonly used Yiddish at its meetings.<sup>25</sup> In fact, with the Argentine declaration of war on the Axis in late March 1945, many U.S.-encouraged efforts to extirpate alien Nazi machinations were so enthusiastically undertaken by the Argentine government as to discriminate against citizens of the Jewish religion who were, most obviously, not enemies (See Chapter Three).

If the DAIA's approach to matters often seemed haphazard at best--as soon as one matter was cleared up another arose<sup>26</sup>--it must be emphasized that it was dealing with a disunited government which lacked many clear policies. A significant cause of stress within the regime was the struggle between the aforementioned General Perlinger and Colonel Juan Domingo Perón. Perlinger had caused deep concern within Argentine Jewry from the time of his entrance into Ramírez's cabinet in October 1943. Antisemitism was a fundamental component of Perlinger's most reactionary strain of Nationalism with which he attempted to colour the government in its early months.<sup>27</sup> While Jewish fortunes under Perón remained uncertain in 1944, the community could not but benefit from his victory over Perlinger, which came in July

of that year with the latter's resignation.<sup>28</sup> Colonel Perón's true success would not be confirmed until his election victory of February 1946, but by July 1945 his powers were significant: he was head of the Secretariat of Labour, Minister of War, and vice-president of the nation. Yet as Perón brought the government under his increasing control, the direction he would follow was not entirely clear. No one could be certain of his position vis-à-vis the Jews, even though his Nationalism differed from that of Perlinger. This changed in October 1945 when circumstances labelled Perón an antisemite--a characterization he would be at great pains to remove.

The events of 17 October 1945 are crucial to an understanding of Perón's rise to power. On that day, the workers of Buenos Aires rallied in huge numbers to support, and to save, their leader. Little more than a week earlier, government rivals had forced Perón to resign. He had managed to broadcast a public message to his *descamisados* before being interned on the island of Martín García. With the monumental rally of 17 October Argentines called him back; the force of their call neutralized Perón's opposition in the military government. Although 17 October is noteworthy for the push it gave Perón, it is less noteworthy for the contemptible elements it attracted. A number of Perón's supporters were staunchly antisemitic and they seized the opportunity to victimize Argentina's Jews for two disturbing days. With cries of "*Mueran los judíos*" a synagogue was stoned, individual Jews were taunted, and various community buildings were attacked and defaced with graffiti. Similar incidents occurred in the provinces.<sup>29</sup> By the time the mobs dispersed, the phrases "*Viva Perón*" and "*Mueran los judíos*" had become tightly intertwined.<sup>30</sup>

Following this outburst, the DAIA took immediate action. President Goldman met with new Minister of War General Sosa Molina, and a note detailing the incidents was sent to President Farrell. On 23 October Goldman summoned members of the Jewish press to brief them on the occurrences. He attributed the antisemitism to, in the words of *Mundo Israelita*, the "*llegada a la capital de numerosos núcleos partidarios de determinada personalidad política del país.*"<sup>31</sup> Though the statement clearly blamed elements who had descended on Buenos Aires from outside the capital, it also suggested that the

antisemites among Perón's supporters were not an isolated segment. On 27 October, however, *Mundo Israelita* was careful to distinguish between Perón's working class supporters and those responsible for the antisemitic attacks: "*Los gremios obreros, por su propia naturaleza, son totalmente ajenos a odio racial.*" The newspaper was certain that Perón and his legitimate supporters disapproved of the violence.<sup>32</sup>

Once again, the Jewish leadership had to approach matters delicately. While there were clearly antisemites among Perón's supporters, there was no evidence to link Perón with their ideology. If fear did exist within Jewish circles regarding this new leader's rise, it certainly could not be voiced openly. The events of Europe clearly showed the folly of any open advocacy of racist ideology--this lesson could not have been lost on Perón. The Jewish leadership could only aid the political aspirant in distancing himself from antisemitic elements which opportunistically clung to him. Their success would depend on the strength of Perón's relationship with his antisemitic supporters. Understanding this changing relationship is one of the keys to evaluating Perón's response to the concerns of Argentina's Jewish community.

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The four months between Perón's triumphant return and the elections of 24 February were tumultuous by any standards. Carried by his momentum, Perón worked hard at shoring up his support. Though some violent incidents occurred on the campaign trail,<sup>33</sup> the principal battle was one of words. And Perón's primary combatant was not to be found in the united opposition, but rather in the person of Spruille Braden, the former U.S. ambassador to Argentina. Less than two weeks before the election, Braden published the *Blue Book*. Based on "a wealth of incontrovertible evidence" it purported to prove

that the present Argentine Government and many of its high officials were so seriously compromised in their relations with the enemy that trust and confidence could not be reposed in that government.<sup>34</sup>

Though the *Blue Book* essentially amounted to an indictment of the Castillo government, failing to prove links between Perón and the Nazis,<sup>35</sup> its publication pushed Nationalists still closer to Perón.<sup>36</sup> Understandably, antisemitic forces continued to surround the candidate through the summer campaign.

The policy of the DAIA and of the non-partisan (ie non-Communist) Jewish press was to promote a strong apolitical stance for the Jewish community.<sup>37</sup> Though individuals were free to vote as they chose, or to join political parties, the community as a whole could not be seen to ally itself with any specific political force. *Mundo Israelita* called attention to the necessity of this position in a 19 January 1946 editorial. The newspaper's intentions were clear, and could be generalized beyond merely the country's Jewish population: "*Una colectividad nacional, religiosa o étnica no es un ente ideológico, y debe mantenerse en una posición que haga posible su convivencia con todos los regímenes.*"<sup>38</sup> Jewish Argentina should enter into civic struggles only when necessary to defend its specific interests. Otherwise, it was imperative that it not act "*en favor o en contra de un partido o de una tendencia, sino ante las autoridades de la Nación y por las vías que corresponden.*"<sup>39</sup> With this policy the Jewish leadership confronted the challenge of the 1946 election--an election which took place in the midst of a bitter and persistent antisemitic campaign waged by Nationalist supporters of Juan Perón.

It was clear that propagators of this antisemitic campaign supported Perón's candidacy. "*En reuniones de determinada tendencia y en desfiles callejeros se asocia la exaltación de cierto candidato al grito de '¡Mueran los judios!'*"<sup>40</sup> Yet, for the most part, the Jewish leadership did not attack the Nationalists on *political* terms, but on the Nationalists' own terms: in actuality, these self-proclaimed Nationalists were a threat to national unity;<sup>41</sup> beyond antisemitism's obvious effects on the Jewish community, it also posed a real threat to *unidad nacional*.<sup>42</sup>

In direct response to the pervasiveness of antisemitic activity, the DAIA contacted all political parties to ask that the struggle against racism generally, and antisemitism specifically, be included not only in their present platforms but also as permanent components of their policies. In its message to the political

parties, the DAIA stressed antisemitism's pernicious effects on the entire country. As the recent history of Europe should have made obvious, antisemitism was not an isolated problem, but clearly a national one. Moreover, this national problem was not being considered seriously enough by the Argentine nation. The DAIA wrote to the political parties:

*No podemos silenciar más nuestra preocupación en esta hora llena de responsabilidad, cuando notamos con verdadera consternación que los partidos, los diarios, los organismos democráticos, siguen sin mayor entusiasmo o con indiferencia este aspecto de la acción ciudadana.*<sup>43</sup>

Two weeks later *Mundo Israelita* noted support for the Jewish community from various sectors of the Argentine nation. They praised the unanimous expression of solidarity with Argentina's Jews and against the antisemitic acts: the large political parties, the Church, students, workers, cultural groups, and almost all the press had condemned the racist incidents and ideology.<sup>44</sup> The DAIA thanked Dr. Tomás Amadeo who was the principal signatory of a declaration against racism prepared by a group of concerned Catholics.<sup>45</sup> The nation supported it, yet Jewish Argentina was still in the front lines of the battle against the Nationalist campaign. And the campaign did not seem to be ending.

A clash between Nationalists and Jewish youths on the night of 23 November particularly concerned the DAIA since, as a result, police detained twelve of the Jews. Goldman and other members of the DAIA met for the first time with the Federal Police Chief Colonel Filomeno Velazco. A friend of Perón's since their days together at the military academy, Velazco was one of the colonel's strongest supporters.<sup>46</sup> (Following Perón's brief ouster in October 1945, Velazco had been removed as police chief but he worked behind the scenes with Eva Duarte and Domingo Mercante to ensure Perón's rescue. Velazco returned to his post a few days after the 17 October triumph.)<sup>47</sup> Despite an auspicious beginning to his relationship with the DAIA--he had the arrested members of the community released and promised measures against the Nationalist gangs<sup>48</sup>--Velazco would, over the course of his tenure, lose the confidence

of the Jewish leadership for his failure to deal effectively with the antisemitic violence of the Nationalists with whom he clearly allied himself.<sup>49</sup>

Goldman sensed the support of the majority of Argentines. He also believed, at the beginning of December 1945, that the Nationalists' campaign against Argentine Jews was intensifying. He expressed his concern in a 1 December 1945 meeting with the Minister of the Interior, General Felipe Urdapilleta. Goldman documented recent acts of violence perpetrated against Jewish institutions and businesses. He asked that such incidents be dealt with as common crimes, and that the source of the violence be considered seriously and cut out at its roots. Urdapilleta strongly condemned the incidents, promising that Nationalist groups would be investigated, and that further violence would be repressed with the utmost energy.<sup>50</sup> Robert Potash, the historian of the Argentine military, has suggested that, in his desire to ensure smooth elections, the Minister of the Interior tried to get rid of Velazco but was unable to do so because the police chief was such a vital asset to Perón.<sup>51</sup> Goldman's methods remained unchanged: the Jewish leadership would denounce the antisemitic campaign as the work of a small, yet dangerous element; the violence was not, or could not be, linked to either the government or any prominent political movement.

However, the Nationalist violence was not seen as such an isolated phenomenon by all in the Jewish community. The denunciations flowed freely in a public assembly held on 19 December in the Teatro Lasalle and organized by the Secretaría Once de la Junta de la Victoria as a public protest against the wave of antisemitism. Several speakers, including the vice-president of the Liga Argentina por Los Derechos del Hombre, vehemently denounced the persecutions occurring throughout the country. Dr. Emilio Troise, the president of the Comité Contra el Racismo y Anti-Semitismo, was the last to speak. He followed his attack on the antisemitic campaign with an assault on the recent emergence of such totalitarian measures as the suppression of free trade unions and the controls forced on the universities. Troise's words were loudly applauded.<sup>52</sup> To some members of the Jewish community, the campaign being waged by the



Nationalists was part of a much larger movement--Peronism--which would have to be condemned as a whole.

The *Mundo Israelita* editorial of 19 January, reiterating the necessity of a non-partisan position by Argentine Jewry, appeared in response to a nascent movement within the community which was attempting to move Argentine Jewry in a decidedly political direction. *Mundo Israelita* saw its editorial as necessary due to the fact that

*ciertos sectores o grupos, estimando que [la] intervención [judía en la política general] es aconsejable, han promovido un movimiento en favor de la participación judía en las luchas cívicas del país.*

These sectors, who wished to enter the political field in a struggle for democracy and against antisemitism, hoped to align Jewish Argentina with the Unión Democrática coalition which opposed the Peronist forces.<sup>53</sup>

It was obvious to many that Peronist forces were not helping the community. Police Chief Velazco, Perón's ally, was not cracking down on violence perpetrated by Perón's Nationalist supporters. For example, when Nationalist thugs began to shoot up an 8 December Unión Democrática rally they were allowed to continue for a half hour before police arrived from their headquarters a mere two blocks away. Yet Velazco's removal was resisted even by Minister of the Interior Urdapilleta. With four dead and thirty wounded, Perón found it prudent to speak, denouncing the perpetrators of the violence, but denying that groups supporting his candidacy were responsible.<sup>54</sup>

With the obvious impunity for Nationalist bullies and the convenient ineptitude of the police, the Jewish community took to defending itself, with tragic consequences. In Buenos Aires, following repeated taunting of the Jewish Fridenberg family by armed Nationalist bands, 17 year old Isaac Fridenberg shot and killed one of the Nationalists in early January as he attempted to defend his family from the latest attack. To *Mundo Israelita* it was clear that Fridenberg had fired in his own defense. Not an isolated incident, it was the culmination of repeated attacks in the context of a growing antisemitic campaign. Only coolheadedness and self-defense tactics were holding the Nazi-style campaign in check; official impunity

merely served to encourage the sectors responsible. The weekly insisted that Fridenberg's trial not be treated as a personal case, but as a public question; the judiciary would rule not on the Jewish youth, but on antisemitism. The weekly wrote:

*Esperemos que la justicia argentina... se hará eco del sentimiento público, y al absolver a Fridenberg, enjuiciará al anti-semitismo, verdadero responsable del dramático suceso.*<sup>55</sup>

Fortunately, the judiciary was to prove less partial than the police. Correctly assessing the context of Fridenberg's action, the judge found him innocent and said that the legal process would in no way tarnish his image. *Mundo Israelita* rejoiced, "En Buenos Aires aun hay jueces."<sup>56</sup> Despite the favourable outcome, opponents of Perón used the episode as evidence of the racism inherent in his movement.<sup>57</sup>

Summing up, in the midst of a heated election campaign taking place in the context of a wave of antisemitic activity perpetrated by Nationalists who openly courted one of the candidates, the Jewish leadership attempted to maintain the non-partisan stance of the community; at the same time, certain elements within that community felt it more prudent to enter the electoral struggle in opposition to the candidate--Perón--whose presidency, they believed, would not favour Argentina's Jews. Though the campaign had been turbulent, orderly elections took place on 24 February 1946. They were Argentina's first presidential elections since 1937. While that ballot had been riddled with fraud,<sup>58</sup> the 1946 election proved, by all accounts, to be fair. A few days after the ballot it became known that Perón was the victor.<sup>59</sup> He would not assume office until June, but his control of the government was guaranteed. In the words of one analyst: "Perón reached the presidency with a greater aggregate of political power than any other executive before him."<sup>60</sup>

Regardless of the previous opposition to Perón within the Jewish community, the Jewish leadership had no choice now but to work with the leader. In a 30 March editorial *Mundo Israelita* denounced the small but aggressive group of Nazis which had infiltrated the masses and were celebrating Perón's victory as their own. Noting an incident earlier in the month when a group of these individuals had disrupted a

performance in the National Theatre to hurl antisemitic insults at an actress they erroneously believed to be Jewish, the newspaper called for the government to back the Argentine public in its opposition to such behaviour. The newspaper clearly alluded to Perón's position when it commented: "*Bueno sería que... las autoridades tomen cartas en el asunto.*"<sup>61</sup>

On 3 April DAIA President Goldman, along with the organization's secretary, Benjamin Rinsky, met with Interior Minister General Felipe Urdapilleta. Visiting World Jewish Congress secretary general Dr. Leon Kubovitzky also attended the meeting. Goldman spoke with Urdapilleta regarding concern within the community in the wake of hostile acts committed against the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina and the temple of the Congregación Israelita de la República on Calle Libertad. The minister assured the DAIA representatives that measures would be taken to prevent the repetition of such acts; although he was not authorized to speak for the recently elected government, he declared that the Argentine policy of respect for human rights and freedom of religion would certainly continue.<sup>62</sup> While this exchange displayed a sense of routine, the words of the visiting representative of world Jewry were perhaps more significant. Kubovitzky told the minister of the interest with which the international press was following Argentina's problems. He noted that Jewish communities from other countries were attentively contemplating the participation of their correligionists in the development and progress of Argentina.<sup>63</sup> Foreign eyes were watching.

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Juan Domingo Perón was sworn in as Argentina's president on 4 June 1946. The development of a cooperative relationship between Perón and the Jewish leadership could only benefit the Jewish community and the new president. Both parties would work over the course of the next three years to achieve such a relationship. Despite the assurances of the president, the DAIA still had two principal concerns with Perón's government: immigration and antisemitism. The issue of postwar Jewish immigration and the

racist policies of Perón's Director of Immigration are explored in the following chapter. The wave of antisemitic violence to which the country's Jews had been subjected for the previous three years did not end with Perón's assumption of the presidency. In handling this, the policy of the Jewish leadership remained consistent: little open criticism was directed at the president himself; rather, others were seen to be remiss in their failure to enforce government policy or uphold Argentine tradition. The continued presence of now General Velazco as the Federal Police Chief through the first year of Perón's presidency was of particular concern to the DAIA.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to outline Perón's relationship to Argentine Nationalism, in the name of which most antisemitic acts were committed. Argentine Nationalists had never formed a cohesive movement, but rather were represented by a variety of groups and periodicals through which they expressed their ideology. The philosophy of some Nationalists was strongly influenced by European right wing thought, while that of others stemmed more directly from Argentine soil.<sup>64</sup> Cristián Buchrucker, in *Nacionalismo y peronismo*, highlights two diverging strains within Argentine Nationalism: restoration nationalism and populist nationalism. Restoration Nationalists were right wing traditionalists who looked to an idyllic past as the only salvation for the future.<sup>65</sup> Antisemitism, based on the belief in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, formed an essential part of the restoration Nationalist ideology.<sup>66</sup> The Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN), and its forerunner the Alianza de la Juventud Nacionalista (AJN), fell into this camp.<sup>67</sup> While the restoration Nationalists were reactionary and backward-looking, the populist Nationalists were progressive and forward-looking. Disdaining the aristocratic exclusiveness of the restorationists, the populists looked to the masses for support.<sup>68</sup> If the former held up Rosas and General Uriburu as their heroes, the latter looked to Yrigoyen. The ideology of populist nationalism led directly to Peronism.<sup>69</sup>

But the picture must not be oversimplified, for Perón also maintained close ties with the ALN. In the 1940s, while still known as the AJN, this group formed a powerful youth militia, finding support from

university students in spreading its anti-Jewish, anti-American message.<sup>70</sup> The Alianza sought a broad base of support, which included workers, and, by the 1940s, had become the largest and most important Nationalist group.<sup>71</sup> As such, it could not be ignored by Perón. In spite of the ALN's racist tone, Perón was in no hurry to sever all ties with a group which had given him much support in October 1945, and whose "strong arm" tactics might be of use to him in the future. The general view is that Perón maintained close connections with extreme (or restoration) Nationalists as he struggled to build a base of support but that, once his position became more secure, he began to distance himself from such people.<sup>72</sup> Evidence of this is found in Perón's victory over the Nationalist Perlinger, and in his public statements against antisemitic acts. However, following his election as president, even as he disowned and condemned their actions, Perón indeed maintained ties with the ALN. This connection supported criticism of the president's handling of antisemitic violence in Argentina.

In July and August of 1946 the Jewish leadership's attention turned from antisemitism in the streets to discrimination in Buenos Aires' Hospital Nacional de Clínicas. On 23 July Leonardo Chait, a young Jewish medical student, was attacked in the hospital. Three other Jewish interns were threatened.<sup>73</sup> The incident was of deep concern for two reasons: in the first place, it testified to the scope of the antisemitism permeating the country since a hospital, and one associated with the university at that, should have been immune from such violence; secondly, the continued silence of university authorities in the month following the attack indicated that antisemitism was not being taken seriously by all.<sup>74</sup> Though the incident was condemned throughout the country, those responsible remained unpunished and the university tried to treat the episode as simply a personal attack or a student joke. Yet *Mundo Israelita* was adamant in its demands on the university:

*Es deber de todas las instituciones que bregan por la igualdad y la democracia--y aquí no hacemos distinción entre banderías políticas--no cejar en su empeño por que se practique una amplia investigación y se tomen las medidas punitivas que corresponden.*<sup>75</sup>

At the beginning of October, in the midst of the affair, President Perón saluted the Jewish community on its celebration of the Jewish New Year in a letter addressed to the DAIA's President Goldman. The Jews did not consider this a mere token greeting: on 3 October *Mundo Israelita* proudly reproduced the entire letter, including the president's signature, on its front page.<sup>76</sup> To some, however, Perón's letter was not of the greatest significance. Once again, Dr. Emilio Troise of the Comité Contra el Racismo y Anti-Semitismo voiced the loudest condemnation. In a declaration prepared that October and signed by Troise, along with committee secretary and National Deputy Silvano Santander, the Comité levelled charges directly at the nation's president. In response to the president's letter, the declaration stated that "*no podemos pasar por alto el hecho muy curioso de que las manifestaciones transcritas no se traduzcan en actos efectivos del gobierno.*"<sup>77</sup> While Perón might speak of equality and respect for different creeds he was not matching his words with action. Those responsible for the attack on Leonardo Chait in the Hospital Nacional remained unpunished. Furthermore, nothing had been done to dissolve the blatantly antisemitic Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista. To the Comité, the facts proved that Perón's government was not keeping its word.<sup>78</sup>

Troise and the Comité could not be ignored; the evidence supported their insinuations of government hypocrisy. However, charges of antisemitism comprised but one weapon in what, for them, was principally a political battle. Radical Party Deputy Santander was consistently one of Perón's loudest public critics, while Troise, as a member of the Communist Party, was a constant nuisance.<sup>79</sup> Their direct confrontation of government antisemitism, however, did not accord with the DAIA's methods. In its condemnations of antisemitism, the Jewish leadership continued its attempts to isolate the nation's top leadership from any blame. In fact, the Comité's declaration coincided with the beginning of direct, cordial dialogue between President Perón and the Jewish leadership. Earlier that year, DAIA President Goldman had met with Perón for polite exchanges on at least two occasions.<sup>80</sup> On 5 November, one month after the Comité's declaration, a sizable delegation from Argentina's Jewish community met personally with the

president for 1 1/2 hours. The DAIA's Goldman introduced all those present to Perón and briefly described the organizations they represented. Following these formalities, the discussion turned to Jewish immigration, the question of a Jewish national home in Palestine, and the continued occurrence of antisemitic acts. On this matter, the president asked the DAIA to apprise him of the details of recent incidents. He went on to tell the Jewish delegation of the difficulty in controlling small, "anarchist" groups which the government had condemned in the past. Over the course of the meeting, all those present were able to express their views; the atmosphere was cordial.<sup>81</sup> In true populist style Perón did a fine job of smoothing things over: he made no real promises, yet reassured the Jewish leadership with his concern. They would simply have to be patient.<sup>82</sup>

While Dr. Emilio Troise could find much to criticize in the president's stance, the Jewish leadership was not averse to working within the parameters set by Perón. In principle, the president sided with the Jewish community--antisemitism would have to be condemned. The only problem, as Troise had indicated, was the president's reluctance to take strong action against perpetrators of antisemitism when the political expediency of such a move was debatable within the context of his own base of support. Rather than pressure the president overtly, the Jewish leadership chose to accept the leader's promises and use them in their own battle against the Nationalists.

In a letter that December, the DAIA resumed its contact with Police Chief Velazco. The DAIA detailed its specific concerns: the Templo de la Congregación Israelita de le República Argentina on Calle Libertad had been repeatedly attacked; Jewish publications had been targeted in November; antisemitic graffiti could be found throughout the city (photographs were included); and antisemitic slogans had been shouted in various quarters of the capital. Such facts evidenced a systematic campaign of violence and intimidation, so the DAIA asked Velazco to adopt methods to prevent their repetition.<sup>83</sup> In late January 1947 the DAIA sent a note to Buenos Aires' municipal authorities when not one of 70 Jewish medical students was chosen to work as a salaried intern (*practicante rentado*) in municipal hospitals. The DAIA

also took the opportunity to criticize the general under-representation of Jews in hospital posts. This was clearly discrimination, a practice against which, the DAIA pointedly reminded the municipal officers, many government authorities, including President Perón, had spoken.<sup>84</sup>

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February 1947 marked a distinct turning point in the relationship between Argentina's Jewish community and President Perón. The nature of their future relationship was typified by two events. Firstly, Perón accepted into Argentina almost 50 Jewish refugees from the steamship *Campaña* who previously had been denied entry into Brazil. The token nature of this gesture is discussed in Chapter Three. Secondly, February saw the creation of the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), a Peronist Jewish organization. The OIA, which would ultimately serve as a nexus between Perón and Jewish Argentina, is examined in Chapter Four. Although the foundation for future harmony was laid that February, the results were not immediately obvious.

Through March and April the antisemitic campaign intensified and the Jewish leadership appeared to lose its patience with Police Chief Velazco. On 19 March a bomb exploded at the Sociedad Israelita in Tres Arroyos, causing significant material damage, though no injuries.<sup>85</sup> On 26 March a Jewish home in Buenos Aires was attacked--apparently, the attack had been intended for a neighbouring Jewish school. On 4 April flammable liquid damaged the Templo Israelita. A week and a half later, on 15 April, a bomb damaged a Buenos Aires synagogue and the School Barón Hirsch. Some arrests had been made, but most of those responsible remained at large.<sup>86</sup> In a note sent to the police chief, the DAIA, once again, could but reiterate the dangers this racist campaign posed to the nation as a whole. The DAIA urged the chief to instruct the police under his jurisdiction to suppress such activity and to find those responsible. Impunity



would only encourage further activity.<sup>87</sup> With the realization that they were dealing with a police chief who better served their enemies, the DAIA simply went through the motions of protesting.

But hope was offered them in June 1947 with the removal of General Velazco from the post of Federal District Chief of Police. As a loyal personal friend, Velazco had earlier served Perón well in a very strategic assignment. Potash suggests that Velazco was also utilized to give extreme Nationalist elements representation within the administration.<sup>88</sup> While there were certainly personal reasons for Velazco's dismissal,<sup>89</sup> his departure had by now become politically expedient--Perón thought it prudent to cleanse his administration of ultranationalist elements as part of efforts to improve relations with the United States.<sup>90</sup> Velazco's banishment did not bring an immediate end to the antisemitic campaign, but it did rid the Jewish community of a significant obstacle to any success in that area. Incoming Police Chief General D. Arturo Bertollo quickly gained the confidence of the Jewish leadership. Less than half a year later, Bertollo would be fêted in a sincere expression of appreciation by the DAIA.

The role of U.S. pressure in Perón's removal of Velazco must now be considered. Ignacio Klich contends that, as president, Perón's foremost international priority was improving relations with the United States.<sup>91</sup> Strained relations with the big power from the time of Argentina's association with the Axis countries had sunk even lower with Ambassador Braden's personal campaign against Perón's candidacy. Juan Archibaldo Lanús, the historian of Argentine foreign policy, suggests that the principal cause of hostility between Argentina and the U.S. was not any fundamental political difference between the two countries but rather the personal agendas of both Braden and Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Even after Braden finished his brief tenure as U.S. Ambassador, he continued to harass Argentina in his capacity as Assistant Secretary of State for Interamerican Affairs.<sup>92</sup> Though Argentina began to come into line with postwar hemispheric solidarity--the Chapultepec Accords were signed in early April 1945 and ratified by the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in August 1946<sup>93</sup>--the perception of antisemitism in the Argentine regime continued to plague Perón in the early years of his presidency. Braden had much to do with

fomenting this perception.<sup>94</sup> The much more sympathetic American Ambassador George Messersmith helped to dispel many negative images of Perón's regime that were circulating in the U.S. Messersmith reported to the State Department that Perón's government was not racist and that American Jews seemed more concerned with the situation than local Argentine Jewish authorities. The ambassador let it be known in American Jewish circles that their criticism of the Argentine scene only encouraged local Nationalist groups and hindered President Perón in his efforts to restrain them.<sup>95</sup> Messersmith's greater efforts to effect a normalization in U.S.-Argentine relations, directly linked with the U.S. desire to monopolize arms sales in Latin America,<sup>96</sup> were extremely successful. His resignation in June 1947 coincided with the announcement by President Truman that the U.S. was finally satisfied with Argentina's compliance with the Chapultepec Accords. The two countries were now on friendly terms, and the opportunity had arrived for the cupboards to be cleaned. The "resignation" of General Velazco, who one year earlier had strongly opposed ratification of the Chapultepec Accords, was announced on 5 June. On the same day, Spruille Braden tendered his resignation as Assistant Secretary of State for Interamerican Affairs.<sup>97</sup> The two nations had made an exchange. While Jewish opposition to Chief of Police Velazco probably had little connection to his departure,<sup>98</sup> the community could not but be pleased with the turn of events.

With Bertollo assuming his new post in the wake of the bombing of the Jewish sports organization Club Sionista Bar Kochba, his success was by no means assured. The DAIA's President Goldman and Secretary Rinsky met with Bertollo on 16 June to brief him on this latest, as well as the previous, attacks. The police chief assured Goldman he would devote his full attentions to the concerns of the Jewish (or any other) community. He expressed his desire for collaboration with both the DAIA and Argentine Jewry in general.<sup>99</sup> *Mundo Israelita* noted Bertollo's promise of energetic methods to find those responsible for antisemitic acts and expressed confidence that all would go well while he was in charge.<sup>100</sup>

Just over one month later, at the end of July, a bomb exploded at the temple of the Congregación Israelita. The attack outraged the community. To *Mundo Israelita*, this attack on a place of worship was

an aggression not only against Jews, but against Christian and Muslim monotheists as well. The weekly expressed concern that the increase in the number of attacks and the continued impunity was causing Argentines to view the phenomenon as, if not natural, then at least inevitable. Yet the paper also expressed confidence that the authorities would exhaust all resources to locate and punish those responsible.<sup>101</sup> Rhetorical confidence in the abilities of ineffective authorities had been voiced in the past, but this latest expression of confidence was perhaps not so hollow. It is noteworthy that the DAIA did not feel it necessary to contact Chief of Police Bertollo following the attack on the Congregación Israelita. The Jewish leadership still felt certain of his ability and sincerity.

Bertollo indeed proved successful where Velazco had failed. Though antisemitic attacks did not disappear entirely, they did decline in frequency. The series of incidents which the community had seen as a *systematic* campaign of intimidation and violence came to an end. The Jewish leadership was so pleased with the turnaround that on 30 October 1947, in the Club Oriente, they hosted a dinner through which Jewish Argentina could express its appreciation for the work of Chief of Police Bertollo. The DAIA's Goldman spoke of the community's gratitude with the warmest regard. For his part, Bertollo said the police force as a whole was to be thanked, and expressed his hope that these circumstances would serve to disprove the lies circulating outside the country regarding alleged racism in Argentina.<sup>102</sup>

The close of 1947 ended an, at times, difficult period of relations between Argentina's Jewish community and the government. At the beginning of November, Dr. Moisés Goldman stepped down as president of the DAIA. Goldman had seen the organization, indeed all of Jewish Argentina, through difficult times. In the effective pursuit of his mission he had gained respect not only within the Jewish community but also from the country's national authorities. Perón himself counted Goldman among his friends.<sup>103</sup> Goldman was not to disappear from public service, but he would be missed as the DAIA's vocal leader.<sup>104</sup> More importantly, Goldman's departure coincided with the end of the campaign of antisemitic violence which had battered Argentina's Jewish community since the 1943 coup. Jews both inside and

outside Argentina drew the same conclusion. In its survey of the period during Velazco's tenure as Buenos Aires' police chief the *American Jewish Yearbook* had expressed deep worry. It wrote: "The situation in Argentina... produced the utmost uneasiness."<sup>105</sup> One year later, although the yearbook acknowledged the persistence of antisemitic propaganda, it also expressed the view that, "by and large, the Jewish community had little cause for complaint."<sup>106</sup> A few years later it would go so far as to state that "the regime of General Juan Perón continued its benevolent attitude toward Argentinian Jewry."<sup>107</sup> Perón's success in managing this change in attitude resulted from his realization, in the early years of his presidency, of the need to protect his Jewish population from antisemitic Nationalists. At home, the Jewish leadership tirelessly reminded the president of the Argentine tradition of tolerance--Perón could not but uphold this tradition. To the north, the U.S. government was keenly sensitive to the prominence of extreme Nationalists and their actions against the Jewish population. Perón's awareness of this pushed him to neutralize the Nationalists in his midst.

Yet in his manoeuvring, Perón never severed ties with the ALN. The Alianza stood by him until his overthrow in September 1955; ALN headquarters were bombed by the army and its leader, Guillermo Patricio Kelly, was arrested.<sup>108</sup> Although Perón had always condemned the ALN's antisemitic campaign, he obviously felt it expedient to maintain their services even as they engaged in activities to which he was opposed. Perhaps his calls for patience on the part of the Jewish leadership were not as patronising as they might have appeared. Kelly has suggested that, at least for himself, as a young ALN recruit in the mid 1940s, Peronism came to change the face of Nationalism.<sup>109</sup> In 1953 he was involved in ousting its leader at the time, the egregiously antisemitic Juan Queraltó. Through this *putsch*, the ALN finally shed the racist ideology which had guided it from its inception and pledged itself wholly to Peronism.<sup>110</sup> Given this, it seems reasonable to speculate that Perón, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, attempted to cultivate associations with certain elements of the ALN at the expense of others. Not wanting to destroy the group,

he carefully, and slowly, co-opted it. The ALN's antisemitism, though still present by late 1947, had, at least, been contained.

Although antisemitism had always been a cornerstone of the restoration Nationalist ideology, Perón rendered it but one--ultimately expendable--characteristic of the ALN's program. In the years following the coup of June 1943, the ALN certainly did not limit its actions to harrassing Argentina's Jewish population. The Nationalist group also directed attacks against other political enemies: members bombed Communist Party headquarters; attacked the offices of the daily *La Hora*; and interrupted the Senate debate over ratification of the Chapultepec Accords.<sup>111</sup> Argentina's Jewish community was caught in the middle of this larger political battle. Perón tolerated the ALN even before he effectively controlled it because the aims of its violent aggression often coincided with his own desires. When they did not, he was prepared to look the other way. At the same time, the Jewish community was manipulated by Perón's opposition. U.S. critics, as well as local opponents such as Troise, levelled the charge of antisemitism even though this did not accord with the local Jewish leadership's strategy. Used to corroborate the accusations of Perón's critics and targeted with the ammunition of some of his allies, Jewish Argentina could only find comfort in a larger political settlement. Fortunately, Perón managed to effect this settlement.

By 1948 Argentina's Jews were able to live in an atmosphere relatively untroubled by the Nationalist antisemitic violence which had erupted with the 1943 coup. Two of three bomb attacks between December 1947 and mid 1949 targeted Zionist organizations. It should not be suggested that such attacks did not worry Argentina's Jewish community. They did. Yet the distinction between "Jewish" and "Zionist/Israeli" targets is not insignificant. To strike out at the former represented a decidedly racist strategy while aiming for the latter emphasized political motives. The racist aggression threatened the Argentine nation of which the Jewish community constituted a part; the political attacks were not necessarily so pernicious.<sup>112</sup>

Perhaps the distinction is not so clear when it is noted that Argentina's Jewish community was strongly Zionist.<sup>113</sup> With the end of the antisemitic campaign, Jewish eyes in Argentina turned toward the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Through the first half of 1948, Argentina's Jewish press followed in detail all statements issued by the British mandate power and every shift in the struggle between armed Zionist and Palestinian Arab forces. The declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948 allowed new currents to influence Argentina's Jewish population. The extent to which these currents affected each Argentine Jew depended on the individual's conception of his or her relation to Argentina.

Following Perón's ouster in 1955 the Jewish community was not to live so easily. Overt antisemitism reappeared in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>114</sup> The horrible fate of large numbers of Jews in the *Guerra Sucia* has also been noted.<sup>115</sup> If Argentina's Jews began to feel the effects of Israeli currents during the presidency of Juan Perón, it would not be until the years of Perón's exile that those currents would begin to carry many Jews to a new home.

## CHAPTER THREE

### JEWISH IMMIGRATION UNDER PERON

Though the coup of 4 June 1943 ushered in a wave of antisemitic violence which kept Argentina's Jewish community on its guard for some four years, the change of government was not inherently detrimental to prospects for Jewish immigration in the last two years of the Second World War. With Argentina's neutrality solidly confirmed at the January 1942 Rio Conference of regional foreign ministers, its continued relations with Nazi Germany highly favoured any efforts it might make to secure the release of European Jews under Nazi control.<sup>1</sup> The 4 June coup reinforced this position by preserving Argentine neutrality; Nazi Germany continued to look upon its South American ally with favour. Therefore, from June 1943 until Argentina's break with the Axis powers in January 1944, the country's position vis-à-vis Jewish refugees was propitious indeed.<sup>2</sup> The tragedy during the war years was that Argentina did not take advantage of this unique position.

Immigration had been the driving force behind the country's dramatic growth from the middle of the 19th century through the first two decades of the 20th; from the 1890s Jews seeking to emigrate from Russia and eastern Europe had benefited from Argentina's open doors.<sup>3</sup> Argentine views of immigration, however, began to change. By about 1910 the positivist-inspired liberalism of the 1890s had given way to a cultural nationalism which disdained the country's ethnic collectivities and the assimilation they resisted.<sup>4</sup>

This ideological shift, coupled with the economic crisis caused by the worldwide depression, saw Argentina tighten its immigration laws considerably through the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> At the June 1938 Evian Conference, convened to promote the settlement of European refugees, Argentina--along with all other countries in attendance--declared unequivocally that it was in no position to accept the refugees.<sup>6</sup> While new laws of that year effectively prevented all but economically viable agricultural immigrants from

entering the country,<sup>7</sup> Leonardo Senkman contends that the closing of Argentina's doors, specifically to Jews, in 1938 "derived from the desire to create an ethnically homogeneous population in Argentina."<sup>8</sup>

The corresponding Argentine indifference to the fate of Jewish war refugees is best exemplified by official indolence in the case of 1000 Jewish orphans from the south of France to whom President Castillo offered asylum in November 1942. Castillo made the offer in response to the entreaties of several Argentine Jewish organizations including the DAIA.<sup>9</sup> Yet half-hearted and sporadic negotiations between Argentina and Vichy France had yielded nothing through the first half of 1943 when the 4 June coup offered new hope for the children. Indeed, within three weeks of the coup, President Ramírez carried the Argentine request for the release of the 1000 orphans above the heads of Vichy authorities and directly to Hitler's foreign office.<sup>10</sup> Though DAIA officials were undoubtedly pleased by this gesture, nothing tangible resulted. In early September, DAIA President Goldman met with officials of the Foreign Ministry who told him that the matter was still in the hands of the Vichy government, but that Argentine authorities were well disposed to speed matters along.<sup>11</sup> Similar assurances were voiced in November when Goldman met with Dr. Ibarra García, the subsecretary of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>12</sup> Despite the polite talk, it was becoming clear that Argentina did not want the 1000 Jewish children ever to reach its shores.

Nazi Germany certainly wished to use the matter of the children to further its own ends. Still, especially after October 1943, Argentina's Department of Immigration began to approach the entire affair with hostility.<sup>13</sup> While acceptance of the children would certainly be a great humanitarian gesture, the reception of such a large contingent of *Jewish* immigrants into Argentina overrode any such considerations.

By the late 1930s a large sector of the Argentine population, including the working class, had come to favour *selective* immigration.<sup>14</sup> In November 1943 the respected Buenos Aires daily *La Prensa* expressed its support for a policy of selective immigration which would favour agricultural workers, discourage politically-motivated immigrants, and seek to maintain the purity of the "Argentine" race. Jews would not be welcome.<sup>15</sup> Sensing that such widespread hostility did not bode well for the cause of the 1000 orphans,



who were otherwise slated to be shipped east to the death camps, the DAIA announced the formation of a Comité de Niños in late December 1943 to promote the children's cause before Argentine authorities.<sup>16</sup> But all would be in vain. When Argentina cut its diplomatic ties with the Axis countries on 26 January 1944, the fate of the children was sealed; Argentine officials now found it much easier to be unenthusiastic about seeing Castillo's offer through to its completion.<sup>17</sup> For its part, the DAIA never abandoned the cause, but the priority of the children dropped significantly in light of Argentina's new international status and the appearance of more immediate problems.<sup>18</sup> None of the 1000 Jewish orphans ever reached Argentina.

If there had been some hope that Argentina might accept Jewish war refugees, based largely on President Castillo's offer, this quickly faded when the country severed ties with the Axis powers in January 1944. A dispatch from J. Griffiths of the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires dated 19 April 1944 was quite blunt in its pessimism: "With particular reference to organized efforts in furtherance of the rescue of Jewish refugees... I take it that there is no hope for anything but official hostility."<sup>19</sup>

When Argentina declared war on the Axis in March 1945 the situation worsened still. German Jewish refugees, who had by whatever means managed to reach Argentina, were now treated as enemy aliens.<sup>20</sup> As citizens of an enemy country they were now required to register with local police authorities. They had to report to police on a monthly basis and required special permission to leave their city of residence, to stay away from home for more than 48 hours, or to make telephone calls to locations outside Argentina.<sup>21</sup> The DAIA had to expend much effort in convincing the government of the need to differentiate between those German subjects who indeed may have warranted vigilance (Argentina had also served as a temporary home for a number of prominent German anti-fascists)<sup>22</sup> and the Jewish refugees who certainly did not. On 15 June 1945 DAIA President Goldman met with Interior Minister Admiral Alberto Tesaire to explain what should have been an obvious distinction. The minister allowed that targeted German Jews would be exempted from a registry of nationals of enemy countries as long as they received individual affidavits from the DAIA.<sup>23</sup> DAIA officials continued their efforts to secure a

permanent exemption for German Jews through the second half of 1945 and into 1946 even as the Argentine government repeatedly postponed the deadline for registration.<sup>24</sup> Following a meeting with the DAIA leadership on 21 March 1946, Foreign Minister Dr. Juan Isaac Cooke promised to study the ongoing problem and make efforts to provide a prompt solution.<sup>25</sup> Nothing, however, materialized. In December 1946 the DAIA was still lobbying the Interior Ministry for a solution to the matter.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, Argentina's declaration of war served "as a pretext for the introduction of strict police controls over immigrants."<sup>27</sup>

The tone of postwar Argentine immigration policy under the presidency of Juan Perón was set by Santiago Peralta, the notorious head of the country's Immigration Department between December 1945 and July 1947. Unashamedly antisemitic, Peralta had published in 1943 the offensive *La acción del pueblo judío en la Argentina*. Questionably an anthropologist, Peralta was able to apply strict ethnic criteria in selecting immigrants to Argentina. Peralta judged the prospective immigrant by the purity of his or her blood. He contended that each ethnic group possessed certain innate characteristics which would have to be categorized by vigilant immigration officials who could judge the likelihood of an immigrant's successful integration into Argentine society. In his aim to "*perpetuar el pueblo nativo, defendiendo su cultura en todas sus fases*,"<sup>28</sup> Peralta favoured rural immigrants who would exploit the land as opposed to urban immigrants who would exploit other people. An inherently urban people (never mind the tradition of Jewish agricultural settlement in Argentina) Jews would debase the desired *mestizaje* of agricultural workers and native Argentines.<sup>29</sup> International critics of Perón's government could not tolerate the continued presence of such a rabid antisemite in this high-ranking post.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, in judging Argentina's postwar immigration policy under Perón, it must be emphasized that Peralta's tenure as Director of Immigration coincided with a large-scale campaign of immigrant recruitment by Argentina. The local Jewish leadership was outraged and targeted Peralta with a feverish barrage of condemnations. But again, as with the Jewish

response to the antisemitism ubiquitous after the 4 June coup, criticism of Peralta's patron, President Perón, would have to be much more reserved.

On 15 January 1946, shortly after Santiago Peralta had assumed his position, Vice-president Ricardo Dubrovsky of the DAIA carried out a long interview with the new Director of Immigration. The Jewish leadership was obviously concerned that a known antisemite would be occupying such a strategic government position. Details of the meeting are unclear, though it is unlikely that any progress was made in the face of Peralta's obstinacy.<sup>31</sup> Fervent lobbying against Peralta would not begin until June of that year when Perón assumed the presidency. The Jewish community was overjoyed by Perón's announcement, in his last speech before taking office, that Argentina would seek large scale immigration in order to develop both its agricultural and industrial sectors. Speaking in Buenos Aires' Teatro Avenida, Perón stressed the significance of the opportunity at hand: in pursuing its own growth the Argentine nation would be able to help many of those millions displaced by the war in Europe.<sup>32</sup> However, owing to the continued presence of Peralta, Jewish Argentina was reserved in its optimism. Four days after Perón's inauguration *Mundo Israelita* declared:

*Aquí, el bien del país, las leyes y los reglamentos y el espíritu de humanidad concuerdan con los propósitos enunciados por el presidente Perón, propósitos que el actual director de inmigración no parece compartir. Su actitud es hondamente lesiva para nuestra dignidad de judíos y al mismo tiempo contra productiva para la economía y la cultura nacionales.*<sup>33</sup>

The Jewish leadership would have to isolate Director of Immigration Santiago Peralta and his racist methods of immigrant recruitment from President Perón and the country's official immigration policy--a policy they perceived to be in keeping with Argentina's liberal tradition and thus favourably disposed toward Jewish immigration.

*Mundo Israelita* lost no time in launching its attack on Peralta. On 15 June the weekly wrote of the Director of Immigration's dictatorial methods and his application of racist criteria in immigrant selection. It was imperative that the public, as well as national authorities, be made aware of the dubious

nature of Peralta's ideology and the newspaper employed sarcasm in achieving this end. In reference to Peralta's belief in the *kahal*, or world Jewish conspiracy, *Mundo Israelita* declared that it would print excerpts from Peralta's *La acción del pueblo judío en la Argentina* until such time as it received instructions from *kahal* headquarters in Paris or London to cease their publication.<sup>34</sup> Two weeks later *Mundo Israelita* stepped up its attacks by explaining Peralta's views on immigration: Argentina certainly did not need educated immigrants, only illiterate farmworkers; if people like Einstein were to immigrate to Argentina then many cows would remain unmilked; the country would do fine by seeking only people to work in the sun, thereby preventing Argentina from becoming cultured and developing a powerful industrial sector. The newspaper went on to quote further excerpts from Peralta's "anthropology" text.<sup>35</sup> Evidently orders from Paris or London were slow to arrive. Peralta denied that his immigration policy was inspired by racial prejudice, but his published works, as well as other statements, were proof enough.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Peralta confirmed that his immigration policy was based on the "technique of applied anthropology" in an interview he gave to an English news agency in February 1947.<sup>37</sup>

Perón must be faulted for his failure to rid his government swiftly of Santiago Peralta. When the issue was raised by the DAIA's Goldman during a 5 November 1946 meeting between the president and a large Jewish delegation, Perón responded that he had not chosen Peralta; on Perón's assumption of the presidency, Peralta had already occupied the post of Director of Immigration.<sup>38</sup> The president certainly derived some benefit from keeping Peralta as his Director of Immigration during the first year of his presidency. Perón's personal opposition to any significant Jewish immigration would remain a non-issue as long as Peralta overshadowed all else to do with Argentine immigration policy. Yet if Perón's inaction proved his essential indifference to the cause of Jewish refugees and Jewish immigration, he began to alter his position in early 1947. In February of that year, the president made his first attempt to placate criticism from within the community by allowing 47 Jewish displaced persons from the steamship *Campaña* to enter Argentina after Brazil denied them permission to disembark. Following the intervention of the DAIA's

Goldman, Perón granted the weary travellers permission to immigrate to Argentina.<sup>39</sup> The Jewish community could not contain its pleasure. *Mundo Israelita* recognized the "gran deuda" now owed the president.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, criticism of Peralta and his discriminatory policies did not diminish.<sup>41</sup> The Jewish leadership attacked the Director of Immigration at the end of March when he refused any aid to a boatload of Jewish refugees destined for Paraguay but delayed on their journey in Buenos Aires harbour.<sup>42</sup> In June, *Mundo Israelita* qualified its praise of a relaxation in immigration regulations with the wish that "las nuevas facilidades dispuestas por el gobierno no sean desnaturalizadas por maniobras de funcionarios imbuídos de prejuicios raciales."<sup>43</sup>

Then suddenly, in July, Perón dismissed Peralta as Director of the Department of Immigration. While Peralta's removal was quite likely linked to international opposition to his conduct<sup>44</sup> it must also be viewed as an olive branch to Argentina's Jews. It is certainly no coincidence that Peralta was pushed aside at the same time as Perón rid himself of General Filomeno Velazco, who had so frustrated the Jewish community as Buenos Aires' police chief.<sup>45</sup> The irony is that even with Peralta gone, very little changed.

Perón's plans to construct a *Nueva Argentina* in the immediate postwar years required tens of thousands of new immigrants. Although racial criteria never entered official government policy (except with officials such as Peralta), easily assimilable, ethnically Latin immigrants were favoured above all others.<sup>46</sup> In 1946 Perón created two new bodies to manage immigration for the *Nueva Argentina*--the Comisión de Recepción y Encauzamiento de Inmigrantes (CREI) and the Delegación Argentina de Inmigración en Europa (DAIE)--both of which were directly responsible to the president of the nation. While the CREI served to integrate new immigrants into the Argentine economy, the DAIE recruited prospective European immigrants. In accord with an ideology which favoured a melting pot society over the perpetuation of ethnic collectivities, the DAIE operated in only two countries--Spain and Italy.<sup>47</sup> If the face of the Department of Immigration changed with Peralta's removal, its underlying mandate did not.

Neither Latin nor Catholic, Jews were seen to be unassimilable.<sup>48</sup> As such, they were not welcome as immigrants by Argentina.

Perón's desire to maintain the *status quo* is evident in his efforts to promote good relations with the country's Jewish citizens, while at the same time quietly advancing an immigration policy which would prevent any significant increase in the size of the community. In this light, the amnesty offered to less than 50 Jews from the steamship *Campaña* can only be seen as a token gesture.<sup>49</sup> Perón strengthened his own image while in no way compromising any fundamental strategy. He gained in a similar manner through his dismissal of Peralta. Such opportunistic manoeuvring became most evident in June 1948 when President Perón allowed 27 Jews who had entered Argentina without documentation to stay in the country.

The situation of the 27 Jews had been brought to the president's attention by the DAIA. In this instance, however, the DAIA delegation had been accompanied, and overshadowed, by several members of the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), a Jewish Peronist organization (see Chapter Four).<sup>50</sup> Thus, the most significant result of the president's overture was to demonstrate the benefits of a loyal allegiance to Peronism. The DAIA, for its part, was grateful for the president's gestures to the 27 Jews;<sup>51</sup> but the Jewish body still sought more. At a press conference in early November, the DAIA's President Dubrovsky drew attention to the continued restrictions against Jewish immigration; he recognized that the OIA had helped in specific cases, but that a general solution to the problem of Jewish immigration was still forthcoming.<sup>52</sup>

The general solution offered by Perón came that very month. Jews who had been imprisoned because they lacked proper documentation would be freed as part of a general amnesty that legalized the status of the many thousands of Jewish refugees who had entered Argentina illegally.<sup>53</sup> Again, the OIA was the channel through which Perón announced the measure.<sup>54</sup> In all, perhaps 30,000 Jews benefited from the decree. However, as Perón's critics were quick to point out, the amnesty also benefited many thousands of Nazis, eastern European collaborators, and Italian fascists who had managed to reach Argentina.<sup>55</sup> Perón answered Jewish calls for a general solution to the immigration question while at the same time legally

availing himself of the services of technicians who had formerly served the Nazi cause.<sup>56</sup> At heart, the amnesty was not even a general solution, since Argentina's doors remained closed to Jewish immigrants.

Argentina's Jewish leadership, however, could not but be pleased with the amnesty. When considered along with Peralta's dismissal, Argentine immigration policy--though it essentially remained unchanged--did not now appear so obviously prejudiced against Jews as it had mere months earlier. In 1948, Argentine Jewry considerably lessened its pressures on the national government in the area of Jewish immigration.<sup>57</sup> The assertion by the DAIA's president at the end of that year that discriminatory immigration policy was the principal problem facing the Jewish community<sup>58</sup> must be seen in light of the DAIA's struggle with the OIA. The DAIA was becoming quite distressed that the OIA was being favoured through the president's concessions to the community in the field of immigration;<sup>59</sup> *Mundo Israelita* clearly attributed Perón's amnesty to the 27 Jews in June 1948 to the efforts of the OIA, with the DAIA being relegated to the status of secondary partner, or even bystander.<sup>60</sup> Continued DAIA criticism of the country's immigration policy was therefore necessary to prevent the Jewish Peronist organization from wresting undue authority from the representative body of Argentine Jewry.

Antisemitism in Argentina had always been viewed by the Jewish community as a far graver problem than immigration restrictions. In the years after the First World War and prior to the world economic crisis, a period during which Argentina remained open to immigrants, Jewish Argentina was much more interested in consolidation than expansion. The Jewish leadership remained quietly indifferent to the cause of Jewish immigration even as external factors continued to push thousands of Jews to Argentine shores.<sup>61</sup> When Argentina brought in tight new immigration regulations in 1938, the response of the Jewish community was surprisingly subdued; Argentina's Jews were becoming truly horrified by the deterioration of the situation in Europe, but did not see a solution in their own country.<sup>62</sup> Even during the war the action of the community seems weak given the gravity of the crisis.<sup>63</sup> While the Jews of Argentina were moved by the horrific fate of the Jewish communities of Europe, they were not willing to jeopardize

their own tenuous position in Argentine society by overenthusiastically attacking the national government on its restrictive immigration policy. But the presence of Santiago Peralta as Director of Immigration was such an egregious insult that the Jewish leadership could not stand idle. They consequently launched a spirited attack on the bureaucrat. As for the many thousands of Jews who had managed to reach Argentine soil by stealth, they had become a *de facto* element within the existing Jewish community. All that remained was to legalize their status. Furthermore, the amnesty granted to Jewish illegals came under the cover of a much larger process of legalization which saw Argentina become home to many thousands of questionable immigrants whom the Jews would have rather seen expelled. The action of the Jewish leadership from the time of the 4 June coup and into the postwar period clearly demonstrated that the antisemitism plaguing the community was of overriding importance.

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It must be concluded that the Argentina of the 4 June coup fell far short of its ability to help Jewish refugees escape wartorn Europe. During the war, the offer to save 1000 Jewish orphans, initiated by an Argentine president, proved to be a source of vain hope. Under the presidency of Juan Perón, as the nation sought tens of thousands of immigrants to fuel a process of agricultural expansion and industrial development, Jews were not welcome; although industrial technicians and engineers could be found among the Jewish refugees of Europe, Perón's government sought only labourers.<sup>64</sup> If overt discrimination was eliminated, the underlying racist philosophy continued to inspire government policy. In this, the Jewish leadership and President Perón found common cause. Both parties sought to strengthen their ties, thereby helping to further consolidate the position of the Jewish community within the Argentine nation. In a process of give and take, they reached a *modus vivendi*. Coupled with this unspoken agreement was a relaxation of the U.S. pressure Argentina had endured since 1942.<sup>65</sup> Argentina, once seen by the U.S. as



hostile to its war effort, now came to be perceived as a potential Cold War ally. As part of the reconciliation between the two nations the North American power chose to look the other way and allow Argentina free rein in its immigration policy from 1947.<sup>66</sup>

The reaching of a *modus vivendi* between Argentina's Jewish leadership and Perón was influenced profoundly by another, external development. In 1948 the Zionist dream of the creation of a Jewish state became reality, fundamentally altering the face of Jewish migration.<sup>67</sup> If Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora had felt pressured to seek Jewish immigration to their various nations, this pressure was relaxed by the events of 1948. In Argentina, 1950 was the first year in which more Jews left the country than entered it.<sup>68</sup> While not all Jews leaving Argentina immigrated to Israel, the Jewish homeland did take a large share: from 1948 to 1983 almost 40,000 made the journey. For those Jews remaining in Argentina, ties with Israel are perhaps stronger than those of any other Jewish community in the West.<sup>69</sup> Perón's consolidation of power, coinciding with his country's reconciliation with the United States, marked an end to some sixty years of Jewish immigration to Argentina. In subsequent years Jewish Argentina would occupy itself with the battle against antisemitism, while the immigration struggles were left behind to become the history of the embattled community.

The failures of Argentina's immigration policy under Perón, however, must not be evaluated in isolation. The postwar immigration policies of two other great immigrant nations of the hemisphere--the United States and Canada--proved just as discriminatory against Jews.<sup>70</sup> In the United States, President Truman's Displaced Persons Act of 1948 erected firm barriers against the immigration of Jewish refugees while encouraging the settlement of large numbers of Balts, Ukrainians, and ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, whose ranks certainly included Nazis and their collaborators. Although amendments to the act in 1950 eased restrictions on Jews, regulations did not tighten enough to prevent compromised immigrants from continuing to enter the United States.<sup>71</sup> The record of Canada (a country comparable in size to Argentina and sharing a similar history of immigrant recruitment) for the period was deplorable. From

1933 to 1948, Argentina welcomed ten times as many Jews as did Canada.<sup>72</sup> The unashamedly antisemitic Frederick Charles Blair, director of Canada's non-ministerial Immigration Branch between 1936 and 1943, rivalled Santiago Peralta in his efforts to prevent Jewish immigration.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Jews were selectively discriminated against in the wave of postwar Canadian immigration that paralleled Argentina's.<sup>74</sup> In a speech before the House of Commons in 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King asserted Canada's right to carefully select immigrants it deemed to be "desirable future citizens."<sup>75</sup> Canada's Jewish community, like Argentina's, was never able to change government immigration policy.<sup>76</sup> Jewish immigration to Perón's Argentina thus conforms to a larger pattern of postwar discrimination against Jewish Holocaust survivors.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE OIA BETWEEN PERON AND THE JEWS

As I have outlined in Chapters Two and Three, the actions of Argentina's Jewish community before agents of the national government in the areas of antisemitism and Jewish immigration were cautious but persistent. Yet the strategy of the Jewish leadership on these two fronts was determined more by circumstance than by any fundamental changes to the nature of government effected by Perón. Neither Perón's immigration policy nor the aggressive Nationalism which accompanied his rise to power presented Jewish Argentina with insuperable obstacles: lobbying for increases in Jewish immigration and battling antisemitism had long been the focus of the Jewish leadership. The Jewish community in postwar Argentina found its greatest challenge in a new source--Peronism itself.

Even more than Yrigoyen earlier in the century, Perón profoundly altered Argentina's political landscape, making him the most important figure in modern Argentine history. His most lasting achievement was to bring the Argentine working class into the political arena. As a populist, Perón sought a direct connection with the urban, working masses, championing their cause in opposition to the *status quo*.<sup>1</sup> In the years before his election as president Perón struggled to ensure that the benefits he handed to the workers were identified personally with himself.<sup>2</sup> However, Perón built his movement on more than just this "direct" connection. He matched his populist politics with efforts to control those bodies which heretofore had represented the workers--namely, the unions.<sup>3</sup> But this action was not confined to labour. Perón worked to co-opt the controlling bodies of different sectors of Argentine society, building a coalition much broader than the working class. Not only strengthening the connection with his allies, such control also helped Perón to neutralize opposition forces--Argentina's Jewish community would have been hard pressed to insulate itself from such a resolute program. Before beginning an examination of Jewish

political fortunes under Peronism a brief survey of the techniques used to manage two other sectors of Argentine society is in order.

The case of organized labour is perhaps the clearest example of the Peronist method of co-option. Perón had already formed a "working alliance" with most major unions by the middle of 1945, half a year before his election victory. In the face of Perón's solid identification with the workers, the labour movement could not but benefit from an association with the politically active colonel. Long excluded from the political milieu, unions suddenly moved to the fore through Perón's patronage.<sup>4</sup> As head of the newly-created *Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión* (growing out of the *Departamento Nacional del Trabajo*, this new subsecretarial body was directly responsible to the presidency) Perón emphasized that unionized workers stood to gain, while unorganized ones did not. Furthermore, the union leadership quickly realized that while cooperation with Perón brought its members advantages, opposition might bring persecution.<sup>5</sup> Perón appointed his own men as interventors in some unions: thus the *Unión Ferroviaria*, which represented railway workers, benefited from the direction of Domingo Mercante, a staunch Perón ally. Under Mercante, railway employees made significant gains: white collar workers earned representation; the system of annual leave was improved; the construction of a hospital for union members began with a large government contribution toward both it and health care services; salaries and working conditions were also improved.<sup>6</sup> Intervention, however, was not always necessary. Under the guidance of Luis Gay, the telephone union *Federación Obreros y Empleados Telefónicos* solidly backed Perón. As a result, the general membership gained, as did Gay himself, who would serve as president of the newly-created *Partido Laborista* until falling into disfavour.<sup>7</sup> The gains, however, had their cost. According to labour historian Joel Horowitz, "union leaders had to cooperate or resist,"<sup>8</sup> and those who resisted were either removed by Perón, or found their power neutralized owing to the creation of a "parallel" (read Peronist) union.<sup>9</sup> Under Peronism, Argentine organized labour lost its independence.<sup>10</sup>

While labour was at least compensated for this loss of independence by its acquisition of a political voice, other sectors were not so fortunate. Argentina's universities, an early source of opposition to the new regime, also lost their autonomy, but with no corresponding rewards. Highly politicized for some time, the country's universities countered the authoritarian hand of the 4 June regime with massive student strikes supported by sympathetic professors. The government could not tolerate such widespread action encompassing the country's six universities. To break them, the regime dismissed large numbers of professors and set the federal police on the students. By late 1945 the government was in control.<sup>11</sup> Once elected president, Perón extended the process: in May 1946 he installed interventors in all six of the country's universities, forcing dissenting students into line with the threat of suspension, and purging the universities of over 70% of their faculty.<sup>12</sup> Legislation late the following year confirmed the universities as apolitical bodies, formalizing their mandate to serve the regime.<sup>13</sup> By that time many professors already had left the country as academic research stagnated under Peronism.<sup>14</sup> If Perón had coaxed the unions into an advantageous dependence, he forced the universities into complete submission.

This brief outline of Perón's technique of co-opting bodies to control larger sectors of Argentine society will centre the study of Perón and the country's Jews on the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA)--the Jewish Peronist body created in 1947. Certain key questions must be answered: Did Perón use the OIA to co-opt Argentina's Jewish community? What conflict, if any, developed between the OIA and the already established Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA)? And how did the Jewish leadership interpret Perón's general overtures to the community? In general terms, what were the fortunes of Jewish Argentina under Peronism?

The OIA was formed in February 1947 through the initiative of Abraham Krislavin, Perón's Jewish Subsecretary of the Interior. Natalio Cortés, who had earned a reputation for community service with his appointment as head of the Hospital Israelita the previous year, served as the body's first president.<sup>15</sup> However, the OIA soon came to be dominated by two community upstarts--Sujer Matrajt and Pablo

Manguel. According to Leonardo Senkman, the organization's mission was twofold: to win for the president the "Jewish" vote, and to direct favours toward the community in accord with government interests. As such, the OIA would operate "*con el expreso designio de cambiar la imagen del peronismo en la calle judía.*"<sup>16</sup> Founding members commenced this task even before the formal constitution of the OIA. On 14 February 1947 a delegation of Jewish Peronists, who would form the organization, visited the Casa de Gobierno to pledge their allegiance to Perón and express their active support for his Five Year Plan. The president's response proved of greater significance. For Perón took the opportunity to begin his efforts at publicly improving his image within the entire Jewish community.

Perón spoke directly:

*Tengo la impresión de que mucha gente de la colectividad, que nos ha combatido, lo ha hecho engañada, en su mayor parte, como está engañada la mitad del pueblo argentino, por los diarios, que no han omitido medios para difamarnos en la campaña que durante toda esa lucha política se entabló y realizó. Yo voy a demostrar con los hechos que no es cierto, como poco a poco vamos demostrando que todas eran calumnias que se nos habían levantado.*<sup>17</sup>

Following this personal defense, the president acknowledged the contribution the Jewish community had made to Argentina: "*Conozco bien los valores de la colectividad y bien sé que ella está compuesta por gente trabajadora y de provecho para el país.*"<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Perón's words reached the entire community: *Mundo Israelita* heralded the occasion on the front page of the following week's issue, noting the "*profunda satisfacción... producida en el seno de la colectividad*" by the president's message.<sup>19</sup> While the newspaper believed the dispatch of a Jewish Peronist delegation to be unnecessary--after all, no other ethnic community had acted in a similar manner--its pleasure with Perón's words was undeniable. An expression of loyalty to Perón, in his capacity as president of the nation, did not violate the all-important principle of political non-partisanship.<sup>20</sup>

Through 1947 the OIA worked at building up its membership as it sought to define the role it would play between Perón and the community. An OIA delegation visited Police Chief Velazco in

early March; though cordial,<sup>21</sup> the meeting proved just as ineffectual as had DAIA efforts in pressuring authorities to contain antisemitic violence. By year's end the OIA, at least, had a Buenos Aires office (at Corrientes 2025, 3rd floor) to which it invited Argentina's Jews with the offer: "*La colectividad políticamente unida cristalizará sus anhelos.*"<sup>22</sup> The first taste of political favours did not come until June 1948. On the 22nd of the month members of the OIA and the DAIA met with the president and asked him to allow 27 Jewish refugees lacking proper documentation to enter the country. Perón granted the request. Significantly, the 4-member OIA delegation, which included Manguel and Matrajt, outnumbered, and thus overshadowed, the two DAIA representatives.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the mere presence of the OIA representatives marked a departure from previous encounters with government authorities. As an umbrella organization, the DAIA represented all Jewish bodies,<sup>24</sup> and purportedly spoke for the entire community. In the past, local community leaders and representatives of Jewish organizations based outside of Argentina (for example: León Kubowitzki of the World Jewish Congress; Moisés Toff of the Jewish Agency; and Simón Weill of the Jewish Colonization Association) had, on occasion, accompanied DAIA delegations to government ministers. Yet the DAIA's authority as representing Argentine Jewry had never been questioned. The OIA's presence at the 22 June meeting set a new precedent by infringing on DAIA jurisdiction. The DAIA would yield some ground, but it was not prepared to cede any authority.

Subsequently, over the course of the next nine months, the OIA would become the principal agent in arranging open contact between Jewish Argentina and President Perón. The OIA facilitated the public expression of Jewish allegiance to Argentina's leader; likewise, it allowed Perón to demonstrate openly his beneficence toward the country's Jewish population. In establishing this role for itself, the OIA forced the DAIA to make defensive manoeuvres, but it never seriously threatened the supremacy of the established Jewish institution.

The OIA first brought the community and Perón together in late August 1948 when the president announced he would attend the inauguration of the OIA's new offices at Sarmiento 2025. In announcing

the visit, *Mundo Israelita* clearly saw Perón's presence at the event as transcending the immediate political circumstances. Perón and his wife Eva would not merely honour the OIA but would be welcomed as "huéspedes de la colectividad." It urged the entire community to take advantage of the opportunity to pay homage to the president who would address his words to all the country's Jews.<sup>25</sup> The DAIA itself jumped at the opportunity. By nature of its "*carácter de representante integral de la comunidad israelita de la República*" it invited Jewish Argentina to the reception.<sup>26</sup> While the OIA had served the community well as a liaison, the absence of wholesale membership in the Peronist organization would not bring disadvantage.

The DAIA wrote:

*Al saludar al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República General D. Juan D. Perón, en su primer contacto directo con la masa de la colectividad, abrigamos la firme convicción de que nuestros anhelos serán contemplados con la mejor disposición y con los ojos puestos en la grandeza de la Patria y los principios inmanentes y eternos del derecho y la justicia.*<sup>27</sup>

The president saw the entire community as his audience; at the 20 August inauguration he addressed matters of concern to all, asking rhetorically, "*¿Cómo podría aceptarse, cómo podría explicarse, que hubiera antisemitismo en la Argentina?*"<sup>28</sup> To Perón, the only real distinction was between those who helped to build the nation and those who did not. As a result, Argentine Jews who worked "*por la grandeza de la Nación*"<sup>29</sup> had nothing to fear from the present government. In fact, it was in their best interest to show *that* government their support, since Perón promised: "*en esta tierra libérrima, mientras yo sea Presidente de la República, nadie perseguirá a nadie.*"<sup>30</sup>

Jewish Argentina was not averse to playing the politics that Peronism seemed to necessitate. Fortunately, Perón allowed the Jews to do so without demanding conscription into the ranks of the OIA. Such a requirement would have compromised the community in a way that its actual pronouncements of loyalty did not. The week after Perón's attendance at the reception, *Mundo Israelita* clarified the apolitical nature of the community's expression: Argentina's Jews had manifested their loyalty to Perón in his capacity as *president* or *primer mandatario* but not as any form of personal obeisance. The editors wrote:



*En el homenaje tributado a la persona del jefe del Estado, la colectividad, sin distinción de ideologías, quiso expresar su adhesión a las instituciones que nos rigen y su respeto a las autoridades que libremente se han dado los argentinos.<sup>31</sup>*

Furthermore, in direct response to the president's words, the newspaper characterized Argentina's Jews as builders of the Nation:

*Tenemos el mismo interés que los demás argentinos en impulsar el progreso espiritual y económico de la Patria, porque en él está involucrado nuestro propio bienestar moral y material y el de nuestra sucesión.<sup>32</sup>*

Perón's attendance at the inauguration of the OIA's new offices did not prove an occasion for dialogue between him and Argentina's Jews; it did, however, offer an opportunity for polite public pronouncements. Yet given Peronism's reconfiguration of Argentine society (and with the outburst of antisemitism which had begun in 1943 still fresh in everyone's mind) such public pronouncements transcended the cordial formality evident on the surface. Perón let it be known that he was not tainted with racist attitudes and bore no hostility toward the Jews of Argentina; the community affirmed its patriotism and loyalty to the nation's president--the Jewish sector represented no "official" opposition to Peronism. With both parties offering mutual assurance that a "*convivencia*" was possible, and, in fact, quite desirable, the meeting was a significant success. Furthermore, the public nature of the event informed a wider audience of this rapport. Importantly, the OIA merely served as the nexus of this coming together--President Perón spoke not just to its members, but to all of Jewish Argentina. The DAIA continued to serve as the representative body, and voice, of the community.

Argentina's Jews honoured President Perón for a second time in March 1949 following the country's formal recognition of the State of Israel. Once again, the OIA organized the event, which took place on 12 March at the *salón* Les Ambassadeurs. And the Peronist body continued to overshadow, at least publicly, the DAIA: Matrajt and Manguel sat at the head table with Perón, his wife, and other government officials. Matrajt, in his capacity as the president of the OIA, was the first to speak, and began by thanking the president for Argentina's recognition of Israel. He spoke of the Jewish people in general

historical terms and then elaborated on their specific contributions to the Argentine nation. Reflecting on the significance of the founding of the State of Israel for Argentina's Jews, Matrajt speculated that:

*ahora que los judíos del mundo tienen una nación, los judíos de la Argentina se sienten más sólida y ampliamente argentinos; sin la angustia que para ellos significaba la posibilidad de su extinción como raza, trabajarán con mayor entusiasmo por la grandeza de la Patria.*<sup>33</sup>

Speaking next, DAIA President Dubrovsky applauded Argentina's recognition of Israel which had been desired not only by members of the community, but also by President Perón and his wife and collaborator Eva. He praised the president as "*el hombre que ha trabajado generosamente por el ideal de la concordia argentina.*"<sup>34</sup> Significantly, however, Dubrovsky saw fit to preface these remarks with a defence of the DAIA, reminding all in attendance:

*Como argentinos, como ciudadanos, como hombres libres, los judíos profesan toda la gama de opiniones y ejercen todas las actividades que son comunes a la totalidad de nuestro pueblo. Otras entidades los agrupan y los representan en cada orden de militancia o de actividad. La DAIA no. La DAIA los representa integralmente, como judíos argentinos. Es como su nombre lo dice, una delegación de todas las otras instituciones: la representación de toda la comunidad.*<sup>35</sup>

The DAIA was fighting back. Evidently the OIA had overstepped its bounds--the recognition of Israel amounted to much more than the inauguration of the OIA's new offices. Though the OIA could not be faulted for facilitating the Les Ambassadeurs dinner, its predominance at the celebration of an event of such importance to the entire Jewish community *did* encroach upon the DAIA's jurisdiction.

To make matters worse, the OIA's Manguel took the opportunity to express the clearly partisan politics of the body which he represented. He praised Perón who "*de una democracia ficticia, hizo una democracia sincera.*"<sup>36</sup> The president himself continued the politicking when, in his speech, he attributed the inclusion in the new reformed constitution of a clause against racial discrimination to "*la iniciativa de la OIA, quien, por intermedio de su presidente, el amigo Matrajt, hizo llegar la feliz iniciativa a nuestro poder.*"<sup>37</sup>

Despite the partisan exchange between Perón and the OIA, and the corresponding defensive manoeuvres of the DAIA, the 12 March homage to Perón strengthened the link between the president and the entire community. *Mundo Israelita* recognized the OIA as the sponsor of the event but did not accord it any political influence within the community.<sup>38</sup> Perón directed his deepest sentiments toward the community as a whole:

*Agradezco esta demostración que se me brinda a mi, un humilde ciudadano de esta tierra, que sólo aspira a verla grande y próspera. Lo agradezco con todo mi corazón a la colectividad que en este día nos hace evocar el valor de su raza y el honor de haber permanecido fieles a su bandera por veinte siglos.*<sup>39</sup>

While a certain amount of fear had evidently prompted Dubrovsky's words, Perón did not threaten the DAIA's position as the principal representative body of Argentine Jewry. The OIA may have organized the Les Ambassadeurs homage, but it had not orchestrated Argentine recognition of Israel--with neighbouring Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay already having recognized the new state, Argentina was certain to have followed suit. Although Jacob Tsur, Israel's diplomatic representative in Uruguay, suggested in February 1949 that Perón was delaying recognition in order to win more local Jewish support for the OIA,<sup>40</sup> there were certainly more realistic explanations for the slow Argentine response. Only two years earlier Argentina had abstained from the United Nations vote on the partition of Palestine as a compromise between its "sympathy for the establishment of a Jewish home and its wish not to upset its good relations with the Arab states."<sup>41</sup> Argentina, with its large Arab population, was the centre of Arab political activity in Latin America,<sup>42</sup> a fact which may have worked to delay, though could never have prevented, Argentine recognition of Israel. It is truly unlikely that the OIA influenced Perón's international policy decisions.

Indeed, deeper analysis of all OIA "victories" indicates that the Jewish Peronist organization had no substantial influence on any of the president's policies. For example, even though the OIA had overshadowed the DAIA in the successful request for entrance visas for 27 Jews in June 1948, the gesture did not mark any real change in Perón's immigration policy; on its own, the DAIA had won a similar

concession from Perón a year earlier for almost 50 refugees from the steamship *Campaña* (see Chapter Three). Furthermore, the value of the 1948 general amnesty for illegal refugees which Perón announced through the OIA was tempered by two points: it benefited thousands of Nazis and their collaborators, and it did not offer any boost to the cause of future Jewish immigration (see Chapter Three). Even the OIA's most tangible achievement--Perón's inclusion of a clause against racial discrimination in the 1949 constitution--was in no way representative of the heavy-handed techniques of Peronism: Perón merely credited the Jewish organization with securing the measure in an effort to show the rewards of political loyalty, without exacting any larger obligations from the Jewish community. Quite simply, Perón did not attempt to co-opt Argentina's Jewish community through the OIA--unlike the country's universities or labour unions, Jewish Argentina maintained its independence. When judged beside the sweeping changes which transformed the country, very little effort was needed to preserve this independence. Though Dubrovsky squirmed somewhat in the elegant surroundings of Les Ambassadeurs--one wonders how Goldman would have handled the occasion--the most serious threat to the DAIA's authority came not from the Peronist OIA but from the U.S.-based American Jewish Committee (AJC).

A Jewish defence organization, the AJC worked to consolidate and strengthen the United States' large Jewish population. Through the 1930s, the prevalence of Nazi propaganda convinced the AJC of the need to extend its efforts throughout the hemisphere; bolstered by the official support of the State Department, the committee stepped up its work combatting Nazi influence in South America during the war years.<sup>43</sup> In 1946, as a new set of postwar priorities emerged, the AJC targeted Argentina's Jewish population in its efforts to reform the organizational patterns of foreign Jewish communities along U.S. lines. In the words of Naomi Cohen, the AJC's authorized historian, initial studies showed Argentina's Jewish population to be "insecure, isolated from the general population, and unrealistic in evaluating its position.... Not realizing their full potential, either as Argentinians or as Jews," the AJC's co-religionists to the south required the established organization's tutelage.<sup>44</sup> To begin this task, the AJC opened a Buenos

Aires office under the direction of Máximo Yagupsky, an Argentine Jew. By mid 1948 he had garnered enough support to permit the creation of a local body, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información, through which the AJC could channel its efforts.<sup>45</sup>

The Instituto's efforts to represent Argentina's Jewish community among the general population resulted in an open conflict with the DAIA which came to a head in late 1948. On 1 October the DAIA sent a letter to the Instituto in response to contact initiated by the latter organization. The DAIA wrote:

*La verdad es que al leer el enunciado de las finalidades atribuidas por el estatuto al Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información, advertimos una coincidencia tan absoluta con los propósitos que informan la existencia misma de la DAIA, que no podemos menos que pensar que nos hallamos, justamente, ante uno de esos casos en que el esfuerzo se diluye en vez de aglutinarse; en que se superpone a otros esfuerzos en lugar de lograr con ellos un armonioso ensamblamiento.... En nombre del consejo directivo de la DAIA--que adoptó una resolución expresa en tal sentido--debemos expresar la íntima convicción de que el Instituto Judío de Cultura e Información no sólo no ha de resultar útil a los nobles fines que informan su creación, sino, más aun, contraproducente.<sup>46</sup>*

The next day, the DAIA published a public declaration against the rival organization:

*En conocimiento de que un grupo de personas se ha constituido en una sociedad, que denominan 'Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información', el cual ha establecido en su programa, propósitos que sólo son de competencia de la DAIA, y que le han sido confiados por la colectividad israelita, en su calidad de única y legítima representación de la misma, declara la DAIA que dicha iniciativa resuelta perjudicial para la unidad de nuestra colectividad y que el mencionado instituto no tiene el derecho de aparecer ante los representantes de la prensa y frente a la opinión pública como organismo dedicado a aquellos objetivos.<sup>47</sup>*

The DAIA did not sense a quick victory and continued its efforts through October to warn its member institutions and the Jewish public of the danger posed by the Instituto.<sup>48</sup>

In early November the Instituto responded to the DAIA campaign by denying any desire to represent Argentine Jewry: if "*alguna de sus fines fueran coincidentes con los de la DAIA, por caminos distintos y bien coordinados se lograrán mejores resultados para la colectividad.*"<sup>49</sup> At the same time, *Mundo Israelita* affirmed its belief that the Jewish community needed a single representative body and that the DAIA was the organization with the most authority to exercise this function.<sup>50</sup> The conflict soon died

down, but the DAIA had clearly perceived the Instituto as a serious danger. The force of the DAIA's public defence attests to this. On the one hand it had to oppose the AJC-backed Instituto as a manifestation of Yankee imperialism: the DAIA had always supported the more internationally-based World Jewish Congress, the AJC's institutional rival, which the Argentine Jewish community had, in fact, helped to found.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, the DAIA had to oppose the Instituto as a threat to its position as the community's voice and leading institution. In the end, the Instituto did not wrest the role of principal Jewish leadership from the DAIA. But it did survive and, despite its unending criticism of the organization of Argentina's Jewish community, it eventually came to be tolerated by the DAIA. In subsequent decades, the Instituto never sought representation within the DAIA although it at least established a peaceful accord with the umbrella organization (evidenced in the invitations it regularly received to the DAIA's annual conferences).<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the conflict with the Instituto, the DAIA's reaction to the OIA did not even approach such an intensity. The Jewish leadership certainly had to behave delicately in all its dealings with the Peronist organization--antagonism would have provoked a response from Perón--however, if the OIA had threatened DAIA authority to the same extent as the Instituto, some evidence would have surfaced. The DAIA's spirited defense against the U.S.-backed organization revealed that the Argentine institution's autonomy and authority were sacred. OIA incursions into DAIA territory--as occurred with the issue of the 27 Jewish refugees and the homage to Perón celebrating Argentine recognition of Israel--forced the DAIA to defend its position, but the mildness of its reaction indicates that the OIA did not represent the wholesale appropriation of DAIA functions that the Jewish leadership perceived in the Instituto. From this, one must conclude that the OIA, unlike the Instituto, did not threaten the independence of Jewish Argentina. Therefore, Perón did not co-opt Argentina's Jewish community.

If the OIA was not meant to co-opt the Jewish community, what then were its intended functions? For one, the organization attempted to garner Jewish electoral support for Perón. Yet on three occasions--

national elections of March 1948, elections to the assembly for constitutional reform in December 1948, and the presidential elections of November 1951--the OIA failed completely to secure Jewish support for Perón.<sup>53</sup> Importantly, this continued electoral failure did not draw any reprisals from the president--against either the OIA or the general community.<sup>54</sup> The absence of Jewish electoral support for Perón, however, did not necessarily preclude Jewish financial contributions for his movement. Another function of the OIA may have been to seek Jewish "donations" to the Fundación Eva Perón. This much is implied by Moshé Tov who was sent to several South American countries by the Jewish Agency in mid 1948 to try to obtain recognition of the new State of Israel and establish diplomatic relations with the South American republics. Tov was well-suited to comment on the Argentine situation--before emigrating to Israel he had been a respected member of the country's Jewish community, even serving as secretary of the DAIA. In his memoirs, although he readily concludes (and without any real substantiation) that the OIA embodied Perón's attempt to control the Jewish community, he presents convincing evidence of the OIA's links with Eva Perón and the policy of reciprocal favours she enthusiastically promoted. Tov suggests that even for himself, a foreign diplomat, access to President Perón would have been expedited wonderfully with a "*suculenta donación*" toward Eva's social work.<sup>55</sup> Tov's recollections point strongly to the OIA as a conduit for Jewish financial contributions to the Fundación Eva Perón, although the full scope of the enterprise remains to be investigated.

Though the OIA worked to win Jewish electoral, financial and public support for Perón, it functioned more as a lobbying effort than an agent of control. While Perón destroyed independence in other sectors of society--he *made* the unions, the universities, and the Supreme Court Peronist--he saw no advantage in forcing the Jewish community into his movement.<sup>56</sup> Strategically, and numerically, Jewish Argentina was not of vital importance to Perón's success. From the Jewish perspective the OIA certainly showed the rewards political commitment would bring. Yet, for the most part, these rewards accrued to the entire community without necessitating wholesale politicization. The fact that even a small number of

Peronists lobbied for Jewish causes was enough to warrant presidential favours. The DAIA welcomed the admission of the 27 Jewish refugees in June 1948 and the inclusion of the anti-racism clause in the 1949 Constitution without violating a sacred community principle and venturing into partisan politics. Public Jewish appreciation for these gestures, through praise of the greatness of the nation and its elected president, satisfied Perón--he neither demanded, nor enforced, slavish political submission. Though the OIA failed to win Jewish political support for Perón it did become, in the early years of Perón's rule, the vehicle through which Jewish Argentina could satisfy the president. But the DAIA itself subsequently proved its own ability to satisfy presidential desires. In the introduction to its 1954 publication *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* the DAIA paid the president its eloquent respects without compromising itself politically:

*Las palabras que van a leerse traducen la esencia misma del pensamiento argentino en algo que le es propio y perdurable: el generoso espíritu que construyó esta patria con el torrente de savia humana venido de todas las latitudes de la tierra; la vocación igualitaria que no reconoce diferencias de raza, ni privilegios de sangre o de nacimiento; que entronca en los preceptos inmortales de la Asamblea del año XIII; que proclama el artículo 28 de la Constitución.*

*Son palabras del Presidente de la República, general Juan Perón. Palabras que dan una respuesta argentina, con acento argentino, al enfoque de uno de los más trágicos problemas de nuestro tiempo; el de la discriminación racial, el de la intolerancia, el del antisemitismo.<sup>57</sup>*

The image which emerges is one of President Perón and Jewish Argentina living in an harmonious *convivencia*. However, evidence which would temper this observation suggests that polite accomodation hid unspoken Jewish resentment of Perón and the nature of his rule. Abundant proof of this sentiment is found in Alfredo José Schwarz's 1991 work *Y a pesar de todo... Los judíos de habla alemana en la Argentina*. Opinion is almost wholeheartedly against Perón in Schwarz's compilation of interviews with dozens of German-speaking Jewish immigrants. One of Schwarz's subjects, still a recent immigrant when Perón assumed power, "*quería ir[se] del país porque era como revivir lo que había vivido. Era como volver a comer lo vomitado.*"<sup>58</sup> Two other Jewish immigrants to Argentina, whom I interviewed in late



1994, expressed similar sentiments: in spite of Perón's cultivation of Jewish friends and his attendance at Jewish dinners he was extremely disliked. The years of Perón's rule were a "*pesadilla*."<sup>59</sup> While a full assessment of the extent of Jewish opposition to Perón would require further research, observations on its origins are possible.

As suggested by Sebreli, Jewish opposition to Perón was tied to Jewish Argentina's solid middle class status. It did not identify with Perón's worker-dominated populism--a movement which, despite its electoral victories, disdained a more conventional democratic system.<sup>60</sup> My interview with Jewish immigrants to Argentina supports this analysis: they believed that with the disruption he caused in the country, Perón destroyed the Argentine middle class.<sup>61</sup> Even if exaggerated, such beliefs may be representative of Jewish middle class sentiment under Perón. The socio-economic basis of large scale middle class opposition, however, was not the only source of Jewish mistrust. Perón provoked a specific "Jewish" enmity in the community.

It is important to note that at least 10% of Argentina's 1947 Jewish population had arrived in the country seeking refuge from Nazism.<sup>62</sup> These immigrants at least, continued to view and interpret the Argentine scene with "*ojos europeos*."<sup>63</sup> Perón's Argentina brought back memories of the Europe which had caused so many to flee. In the words of one of Schwarz's subjects, "*Para mí Perón era un dictador. Todas esas manifestaciones de masas, las reuniones obligadas y esa idolatría a una persona; ya se sabía a lo que llevaba. Me recordaba mucho de Mussolini*."<sup>64</sup> Schwarz suggests that even if these immigrants, in perceiving Peronism as descending directly from the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, ignored the good Perón did Argentina, there was a "*particular y lógica aversión que existe en estos inmigrantes frente a los movimientos de masas y las manifestaciones populares multitudinarias*."<sup>65</sup> Perón intentionally represented his forces not merely as a new political voice in Argentina, but as a "movement."<sup>66</sup> In the postwar period, most Jews (including those without direct experience of fascist Europe) must have felt understandably uneasy with Perón's "national" movement. Although the differences between Perón and the European

fascist dictators were considerable,<sup>67</sup> Perón's charisma, and able use of the radio as a tool for mass communication,<sup>68</sup> evoked chilling associations for many. Also, with the increasing authoritarianism of Perón's rule after the late 1940s,<sup>69</sup> it is no wonder that Jewish Argentina longed for a return to a more traditional, openly pluralistic, democracy.<sup>70</sup>

Peronism, despite its electoral victories, clashed with genuine pluralism; even though bans on political parties from the 1943 coup were lifted before the election of 1946, Perón attempted to force all Argentines into open political allegiance. While the DAIA succeeded in maintaining the collective independence of the Jewish community, individual Jews undoubtedly felt, and resented, political pressure from the president. Jewish Argentina had long embraced a wide variety of disparate political groupings; such diversity had grown out of the European origins of the large majority of Argentina's Jews.<sup>71</sup> But Peronism did not welcome this pluralism. In his August 1948 speech to Argentine Jewry, on the occasion of the inauguration of the OIA's new offices, Perón had declared, "*En la Argentina no debe haber más que una sola clase de hombres: hombres que trabajen por el bien nacional, sin distinciones.*"<sup>72</sup> While Perón welcomed Jews into his movement, he implied that those who did not join would raise doubts about their patriotism; Argentina's Jews had learned to prosper through their distinctions and for this reason felt stifled by Peronism. The obvious necessity for self-preservation forced the Jewish leadership to "play the game" set up by Perón. If the adoration expressed for Perón by both the DAIA and *Mundo Israelita* was dishonest, this was the price to pay for maintaining a cordial *convivencia* with the president; the OIA, while bothersome, was no threat to community autonomy, and could, under the circumstances, be tolerated. The Jewish institutions simply matched President Perón's hypocrisy: his grand statements to the community translated into token favours, rather than substantial policy changes. Indeed, Perón's Jewish policy was controlled much more by external factors, particularly relations with the U.S., than by the local community itself. Perón's distaste for antisemitism allowed the Jewish leadership to co-operate without compromising

any fundamental principles. If at heart Jewish Argentina opposed Perón then the DAIA's success at navigating a peaceful co-existence would seem deserving of that much more praise.

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Yet certain important questions remain to be answered: Why did the DAIA feel so threatened by the Instituto and not by the OIA? Why did Perón not exert greater political pressure on either the DAIA or the general Jewish community? What is the significance of DAIA efforts to maintain official community neutrality when Jewish Argentina appeared to oppose Perón overwhelmingly? And finally, how did Argentina's Jews find themselves most suitably represented?

The OIA was certainly inadequately structured to represent Jewish Argentina. For one, it was a young organization with no wide base of support; the DAIA, in contrast, had worked hard in its decade and a half of existence to successfully win respect throughout the community. Moreover, it is quite unlikely that the OIA's leadership garnered much respect among Argentina's Jews. Manguel, certainly, was seen as an opportunistic upstart. In his memoirs, Moshé Tov, a member of Argentina's Jewish community before emigrating to Palestine and entering the Israeli diplomatic service, characterizes Manguel as being under the thumb of Eva Perón and concerned more with petty political manoeuvring than with larger issues of import to the community.<sup>73</sup> In comparison, the DAIA's Dubrovsky, and especially Moisés Goldman, had achieved solid reputations of service in circles both inside and outside the Jewish community.<sup>74</sup> In addition, because of the OIA's sacred principle of absolute commitment to Perón, the organization did not represent Jewish Argentine opinion. Significant Jewish opposition to Perón had first become evident during the 1946 election campaign, when strong forces in the community sought to ally Jewish Argentina with the Unión Democrática coalition (see Chapter Two). Following Perón's election to the presidency, subsequent ballots proved the depth of Jewish resistance; Alfredo Schwarz's subjects help to illustrate the intensity of

Jewish anti-Perón sentiments. Though the exact size of the OIA's membership remains uncertain--even Senkman has failed to speculate on this matter--the organization clearly failed to attract a large following and never amounted to much more than one of the numerous Peronist groups linked to ethnic communities.<sup>75</sup> Without a wide base of support, guided by a leadership not respected in the community, and, most importantly, pursuing a political cause wholly at odds with the majority Jewish opinion--the OIA did not threaten the DAIA.

The Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información was also a young organization with no proven record of service in the Jewish community. On this level it was as empty a threat to the DAIA as the OIA. However, with its public statement of principles which explicitly coincided with those of the DAIA, the Instituto indeed represented a challenge to the established Jewish organization. The DAIA had no choice but to defend itself against the Yankee imperialism inherent in a rival organization that put forth a parallel agenda and maintained strong ties with the American Jewish Committee. But the DAIA's opposition to a U.S.-backed organization was only coincidentally similar to Nationalist anti-imperialist ideology: the resemblance between the Instituto's social objectives and those of the DAIA represented the most serious threat to the latter organization. However, a certain degree of pressure also issued from the Instituto's political stance. Though it attempted to remain politically neutral,<sup>76</sup> the Instituto was likely perceived in the community as quietly opposed to Perón: in 1953 its president, Simón Mirelman, was imprisoned for two months for not declaring his public support for Perón;<sup>77</sup> and, after Perón's ouster, a delegation from the Instituto was the first Jewish group received by President Pedro Aramburu.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the Instituto was more representative of the anti-Peronist sentiment widespread in the Jewish community than was the DAIA, which exerted much energy in attempting to maintain official Jewish political neutrality and public Jewish amity with President Perón.

The disparity between DAIA politics and Jewish opinion explains Perón's laxness in politicizing the community. Quite simply, Perón did not attempt to co-opt Jewish Argentina--through the OIA or by

any other means--because such a measure was unnecessary. The DAIA gave Perón more than he could have expected--public harmony with a community which at heart opposed him. Although Perón continued his attempts to win the Jewish vote through the OIA, his failure was a slight affront, not a crushing blow. Jewish electoral opposition was insignificant next to Perón's massive electoral success. On the other hand, to *force* Jewish Peronization would bring grave consequences: Perón was keenly aware of U.S. sensitivity to antisemitism in Argentina,<sup>79</sup> and any strong arm tactics on his part would nullify his efforts to sustain good relations with the North American power. The ease with which the DAIA embraced Perón's public overtures to the community marked it as a political ally of Peronism. This relationship had begun with the DAIA's conservative approach to the issues of antisemitism and Jewish immigration--in spite of Perón's complicity with "enemies" of the Jewish community, the DAIA left him alone. The conservative strategy grew out of the DAIA principle of political non-partisanship. It can be argued that the preservation of this principle served the interests of Jewish Argentina by protecting the community from the consequences of resistance to Perón. Still, it must be asked: Would Perón have allowed Jewish intransigence to threaten Argentina's relationship with the United States? And would the DAIA's non-compliance have brought reprisals? Only one thing is certain, in so readily accomodating Perón, the DAIA did *not* represent Jewish Argentine opinion.

In spite of the respect the DAIA enjoyed in Argentina's Jewish community, it had been criticised often for representing its member *institutions* and not the general community. One of the loudest voices calling for reform of the organization came from *Mundo Israelita*; in early September 1945 the newspaper wrote:

*La DAIA, gracias al sentimiento de responsabilidad que caracteriza a sus dirigentes, cumple una labor muy eficiente, siendo acreedora al reconocimiento general. Sin embargo, por la forma en que está constituida, está lejos de ser una representación auténtica de la colectividad. Esto le resta fuerza y conspira contra su propia existencia. Formada en base a las instituciones adheridas, sin discriminación alguna, la autoridad de la DAIA se hace bastante objetable. En el mejor de los casos, es una representación de esas sociedades, pero no de la colectividad.*<sup>80</sup>

The DAIA itself acknowledged the problem, but an attempt in July 1946 to call a general Jewish congress in which to discuss restructuring the organization was postponed indefinitely due to internal opposition.<sup>81</sup> In November 1948, just as the DAIA's struggle with the Instituto was settling down, *Mundo Israelita*, in a full, page one entreaty, called for "*una representación auténtica de la colectividad.*"<sup>82</sup> The newspaper felt that, "*ahora toda la opinión pública judía coincide con nosotros, y se advierte un sincero deseo de sanear los vicios constitutivos de la entidad representativa judeoargentina, de democratizar sus procedimientos.*"<sup>83</sup> Formed by a variety of institutions whose only common feature was their Jewish membership, the DAIA could not assume the right to speak for the entire Jewish community, even though the organization enjoyed moral authority and popular support.<sup>84</sup> To *Mundo Israelita*, the only solution to this problem was to restructure the DAIA around a federation of the many distinct Jewish communities (*kehillas*) located throughout the country.<sup>85</sup> The fact that the DAIA did not readily pursue this course underscores an inability to represent Argentina's Jewish community. How could the DAIA act in what it perceived to be the community's best interest, while paying little respect to majority Jewish opinion? Even if the consequences of the DAIA's conservative tack were negligible under Peronism, the organization did establish a precedent for its political activity in times of crisis: during the *Guerra Sucia*, a quarter century later, the DAIA's refusal to take a political stand would have grave repercussions for the community.

If the DAIA's strategy did not accord with general Jewish opinion, an external development at least mitigated the situation for Argentine Jews under Perón. One of Schwarz's interview subjects has gone so far as to say that, "*Los dos momentos más grandes para mí fueron la creación del Estado de Israel en el 48 y la caída de Perón en el 55.*"<sup>86</sup> The DAIA's expressions of loyalty to Argentina and its president confirmed Jewish commitment to the Argentine "nation." Yet, using Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as "an imagined political community,"<sup>87</sup> Argentina's Jews conceived of themselves as part of both the Argentine polity and world Jewry: such a self-conscious placement within two communities did not imply dual loyalties; rather, it provided two sources of sustenance. Jewish Argentina overwhelmingly

supported Zionism, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 marked the triumphant realization of the Zionist dream. The Jews of Argentina, politically misrepresented by their leadership, readily identified with the new sovereign embodiment of the worldwide community of Jews. Jewish Argentina, though never physically threatened by the government, certainly found, in the birth of Israel, deep comfort from the tensions created by its underlying opposition to the dominant ideology of Juan Perón's Argentina.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Jewish Argentina survived the crises which emerged under Juan Perón: the antisemitism that erupted following the coup of 4 June 1943 disappeared as Perón distanced himself from those responsible and, in mid 1947, purged the government of racist ultranationalists (Chapter Two); the failure to secure substantial Jewish immigration to Argentina was mitigated by the creation of the State of Israel (Chapter Three); and the Jewish leadership's accommodation of Peronism, under the guise of political neutrality, guaranteed the community security from any hostile efforts at politicization by Perón (Chapter Four). The position of the Argentine Jewish community, however, deteriorated in the decades following Perón's overthrow. While in the 1940s antisemitic activity by such groups as the ALN was limited, and lacking in wide support, during the 1960s and 1970s antisemitism pervaded larger sectors of Argentine society and manifested itself in increasingly appalling ways.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s several Nationalist groups emerged as enthusiastic practitioners of antisemitism: the most notorious were Tacuara, the Unión Cívica Nacionalista (UCN), and the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista (GRN).<sup>1</sup> An already high level of vandalism targeting Argentina's Jewish community during 1959<sup>2</sup> was noticeably exacerbated in 1960 when Israeli agents kidnapped Adolph Eichmann from a Buenos Aires suburb and spirited him to Israel to face prosecution for his wartime activities.<sup>3</sup> Two antisemitic incidents in the next several years were particularly disturbing. The first occurred in June 1962 when a young Jewish student named Graciela Sirota was abducted and a swastika brutally carved into her chest.<sup>4</sup> The police never apprehended those responsible, and even claimed that DAIA criticism of the handling of the case only served to hide the economic crimes of the Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> A work stoppage (*paro*) was called by the DAIA for 28 June to protest the incident and was widely supported by non-Jews.<sup>6</sup> The second serious incident occurred in February 1964 when another



young Jew, 32 year old Raúl Alterman, was assassinated by Nationalists in revenge for Tacuara casualties that resulted from a bungled attack on labour organizers in the city of Rosario.<sup>7</sup> In a letter to Alterman's parents, Tacuara crudely explained: "*a su hijo lo han matado porque era un perro judío comunista.*"<sup>8</sup>

One explanation for the increase in antisemitism comes from the warning sounded by the Argentine sociologist Gino Germani in his 1962 study "Antisemitismo ideológico y antisemitismo tradicional." Showing antisemitism to be more widespread, though of a "traditional," less virulent strain amongst the lower classes, Germani speculated that this large sector of Argentine society could serve as a reserve force to be exploited by the less numerous, though more fervent, upper and middle class "ideological" antisemites.<sup>9</sup> The facts show Germani's speculations to have been accurate: organized antisemitism, which had been quite limited in the 1940s, expanded through the 1960s, attracting greater numbers of followers and finding expression in more frequent, and far more serious, attacks. The position of Jewish Argentina had so deteriorated that in October 1962 the Jewish newspaper *La Luz* asked "*si valía la pena para los judíos seguir viviendo en la Argentina.*"<sup>10</sup>

Though the crisis faced by the Jewish community was more serious than it had been two decades earlier, there were similarities between the two situations. For example, the antisemitism of the 1960s was part of a larger political battle in which Nationalist groups, which saw Jews as leftist subversives, tried to use antisemitism to undermine Argentine democracy.<sup>11</sup> In light of this, the strategy of the DAIA echoed its actions in the mid 1940s: the organization strove to explain that antisemitism constituted an aggression against not just the Jews, but all of Argentine society.<sup>12</sup> However, the DAIA of the 1960s was more politicized than it had been under Peronism. The Jewish organization actively allied itself with democratic forces despite the general impunity for antisemitic agitators under democratic presidents Frondizi and Illia, who tolerated Nationalist activity as a check on populist agitation and the advance of Peronism. The promises by authoritarian forces to return the country to both economic and social stability did not convince the Jewish leadership.<sup>13</sup>

While Jewish Argentina, together with its leaders, stood united behind democracy, Argentina's ideological panorama was much more complex than it had been under the government of Perón. During their leader's exile, Peronist forces struggled to win recognition for a movement whose unity had splintered into numerous ideologies. By 1965 the Jewish leadership was particularly troubled by the attempts of the Nationalist group Tacuara to infiltrate and co-opt union supporters of Peronism.<sup>14</sup> At a DAIA conference in May of that year, vice-president Dr. León Pérez asked if the community should attempt to understand and legitimize its relations with the Peronist movement.<sup>15</sup> If antisemitism had been primarily confined to right wing Nationalism in the past, there had arisen the new danger that Peronism's populist Nationalism would embrace antisemitism under the cloak of anti-Zionist sentiment.<sup>16</sup> Strong proof of this had come in October 1964 when the Peronist deputy Juan Carlos Cornejo Linares asked Congress to form a special commission to investigate the anti-Argentine activities of Zionism. Though the Peronist block rejected the plan, its mere proposal was ominous.<sup>17</sup> A 1965 DAIA survey showed antisemitism to be more prevalent among workers who supported Peronism than those who did not.<sup>18</sup> By 1970, the Peronist movement manifested stronger signs of antisemitism than it had a quarter century earlier.

In fact, while in exile, Perón himself issued anti-Zionist statements. They emerge in his book *La hora de los pueblos* and stem from Perón's perception of the internationalization of the world economy and the conspiratorial theory of Synarchist Internationals which included Zionism.<sup>19</sup> Leonardo Senkman notes the importance of distinguishing between the ideological components of Peronism in power and Perón's statements while in exile--the notion of international synarchism never entered the official "corpus" of Peronist doctrine.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1970s synarchism influenced wide sectors of the Peronist left as they coupled their offensive against the internal enemy--the oligarchy--with a struggle against the international enemy, which included Zionists.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the "Plan Andinia," in which international Zionism supposedly sought to annex Patagonia from Argentina in order to enlarge the Jewish State, was seen as credible in many Peronist circles even though the plot had been fabricated by Walter Beveraggi Allende--

long an enemy of Perón.<sup>22</sup> Although Perón, in a 1973 interview with the DAIA following his return to Argentina, noted the absurdity of connecting synarchism with the local Jewish community,<sup>23</sup> the distinction was lost on many.

Right wing Peronists saw strong evidence of synarchist infiltration in the social and economic policies of Perón's Jewish Finance Minister, José Ber Gelbard; one of Gelbard's strongest defenders, Jacobo Timerman, the editor of the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Opinión*, was also Jewish.<sup>24</sup> The ideological attacks against Gelbard and Timerman by such right wing Peronist publications as *El Caudillo* were blatantly antisemitic in character; furthermore, in portraying the Montoneros, the left wing guerrillas, political cartoons invariably utilized an iconography which included a long nose and a Star of David.<sup>25</sup> Once again in Argentina, the Jews found themselves particularly vulnerable to the ideological battle being waged throughout the country. And the increasing resort to violence by forces on both the right and the left did not bode well for the community.

During the *Guerra Sucia*, between 1976 and 1983, as Argentine military juntas attempted to purge the country of leftist terrorists and subversives through the euphemistically-titled Proceso de Reorganización Nacional, Jews were overrepresented among the 8,800 "official" *desaparecidos*. *Nunca más*, the 1984 report of the Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP) suggests that almost 9% of the victims were Jewish. While this figure may be distorted, the more conservative estimate of almost 4%, cited in a 1982 report by Yitzhak Shamir (at the time Israel's Foreign Minister) is still unusual for a Jewish community which accounted for about 1% of Argentina's total population.<sup>26</sup> Jews were perhaps not targeted for racist reasons, but rather may have been disproportionately victimized because of their strong representation as political activists or as members of the professional classes.<sup>27</sup> However, it is an indisputable fact that Jewish prisoners faced particularly harsh treatment. Jacobo Timerman's account of his own abduction provides ample evidence. Timerman writes that "the Jewish question dominated all the interrogations during [his] entire imprisonment."<sup>28</sup> Security forces found special

"pleasure" in torturing a Jewish prisoner as "hatred of the Jew was visceral, explosive, a supernatural bolt, a gut excitement, the sense of one's entire being abandoned to hatred."<sup>29</sup>

The Jewish tragedy of the *Guerra Sucia* was sharpened by the DAIA's failure to confront the crisis. The Jewish organization did little to help Jewish *desaparecidos*, often casting blame for the tragedy onto the victims themselves. The DAIA did not criticize the junta and sought to minimize reports of Argentine antisemitism in its contact with international Jewish organizations. Furthermore, in its own report, the DAIA's efforts to help Argentina's Jews during the *Guerra Sucia* were misrepresented.<sup>30</sup> Ignacio Klich, in his examination of the Jewish community during the period, concludes that much of the DAIA's labour better served the regime than its victims.<sup>31</sup> The DAIA fell short of its claim to represent *all* Argentine Jews;<sup>32</sup> it worked to preserve the community's "institutional life" while maintaining an ominous silence regarding the destructive antisemitism that saw many community members tortured and killed.<sup>33</sup>

Though Argentina's return to democracy ended the brutality of the *Guerra Sucia*, antisemitism has not disappeared from the country. The government of the Radical Party's Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), with its Jewish members, was pejoratively referred to as "*la sinagoga radical*."<sup>34</sup> On 17 March 1992 the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was shaken by a bomb blast, killing more than 30; and on 18 July 1994, 86 people were killed when a bomb levelled the Jewish community's headquarters (which included DAIA offices) on Buenos Aires' Calle Pasteur.<sup>35</sup> As I write, in December 1995, some arrests have been made in the 1994 bombing, though no substantial clues have emerged regarding the first. While the attacks are reportedly connected to Middle East groups which oppose the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, allegations of local complicity seem confirmed as most of those arrested are members of the Argentine Armed Forces.<sup>36</sup> Antisemitism appears ensconced in one of the central institutions of the Argentine state.

In retrospect, with the growth of antisemitism since the 1960s placing increasing pressure on Argentina's Jewish community, the position of Jewish Argentina under Juan Perón's first presidency seems remarkably secure. Antisemitism was a problem then, but not on the same scale as it would later become.

Though in the 1940s the DAIA may have failed to adequately represent the community in its efforts to maintain absolute political neutrality, this position did not have the same consequences as the organization's apolitical complacency in the 1970s. Despite the antisemitism inherent in the Argentine Nationalism of the 1940s, Perón's Argentina found a place for the country's Jews within its program of social integration. In subsequent decades the viability of a Jewish community in Argentina has declined. What explanation could exist for this? The answer may lie in a study of Argentine political violence, almost non-existent in the 1940s, but endemic twenty five years later.

## NOTES

### Notes to Introduction

1. Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, "La fiesta del Monstruo," in *Nuevos cuentos de Bustos Domecq*, 2d ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Librería La Ciudad, 1977), 85-103. The story was written around 1947 and circulated in typewritten copies among Perón's opponents in Argentina and Uruguay; it was first published in 1955 after Perón's downfall. Alberto Ciria, *Política y cultura popular: La Argentina peronista 1946-1955* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1983), 312.
2. Juan José Sebrelli sees Borges' description of the Peronists as part of liberal attempts to demonstrate Perón's antisemitism in *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 239; Alberto Ciria uses the Borges story as an example of the exaggeration of the "estilo peronista" by Perón's opponents in *Política y cultura*, 311-2. On Borges' opposition to Perón see Martin S. Stabb, *Jorge Luis Borges* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 22-23.
3. Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), xiii, xvii-xviii.

### Notes to Chapter One

1. Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, ed. Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 92, 94-95. DellaPergola, often in collaboration with U.O. Schmelz, is the foremost expert on Jewish demography in Latin America; the earliest attempt to examine with precision Jewish demography in Argentina is Simon Weill, *Población israelita en la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Bene Brith, 1936); the other important demographic study is Ira Rosenswaike, "The Jewish Population of Argentina: Census and Estimate, 1887-1947," *Jewish Social Studies* 22 (October 1960). While the history of Jewish Argentina can be assembled from a wealth of material which has issued from the community, the most important general historical studies of the community are: Bernard D. Ansel, "The Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community in Argentina, 1852-1891" (Ph.D. diss, University of Kansas, 1969); Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns," Part I *Dispersion and Unity* 12 (1971), Part II *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971-72), Part III *Dispersion and Unity* 15 (1972-73); Judith Laikin Elkin, *Jews of the Latin American Republics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Irving Louis Horowitz, "The Jewish Community of Buenos Aires," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 4 (1962); Boleslao Lewin, *La colectividad judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Alzamor Editores, 1974); Victor A. Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990); Eugene F. Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982).
2. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part II, 174.
3. *Ibid.*, 174-76.
4. Horowitz, "The Jewish Community," 161. On the early roots of conflict between western and eastern European Jews in Argentina see Bernard D. Ansel, "Discord Among Western and Eastern European Jews in Argentina," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60 (December 1970).
5. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part II, 177-78.

6. Ibid., 174.
7. Based on data provide in DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends," 92; and Rosenswaike, "Jewish Population," 200,206.
8. From Rosenswaike, "Jewish Population," 207.
9. Based on data provided in Rosenswaike, "Jewish Population," 206-7; and DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends," 92.
10. Carlos W. Waisman, "La ideología del nacionalismo de derecha en la Argentina: El capitalismo, el socialismo y los judíos," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 227.
11. Ibid., 227-28.
12. Ibid., 216-18.
13. The most detailed bibliography on Peronism, Laszlo Horvath, comp., *A Half Century of Peronsim, 1943-1993: An International Bibliography* (Stanford: Hoover Institution -- Stanford University, 1993), contains more than 3000 entries.
14. Ysabel F. Rennie, *The Argentine Republic* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945), 383-86.
15. *Who's Who in America*, 49th ed. (1995) vol. I (New Providence, New Jersey: Marquis Who's Who, Reed Reference Publishing, 1994), 1909.
16. Ray Josephs, *Argentine Diary: The Inside Story of the Coming of Fascism* (New York: Random House, 1944), 354.
17. Ray Josephs, "Don't Cheer for Perón," *National Jewish Monthly*, November 1946, 88.
18. See Ray Josephs, "Perón Has Not Changed," *National Jewish Monthly*, October 1948, 46-47.
19. See Louis Shub, "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 47* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945); "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 48* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946); Elsie F. Zala, "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 49*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947).
20. Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988), 206; see reports by Cortesi in *New York Times*, 20 October 1945, 5; *New York Times*, 25 November 1945, 1; *New York Times*, 28 November 1945, 8. In mid 1945 Cortesi was rewarded for his strong anti-Perón position: with the reporter still trying to secure U.S. citizenship, Spruille Braden, Perón's strongest enemy in the State Department, "recommended [Cortesi's] difficulties with Immigration be smoothed out." Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 467.
21. *New York Times*, 26 November 1945, 20.

22. Robert J. Alexander, *The Perón Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 222-23 (page references are to reprint edition). In his bibliography Alexander cites Joseph's *Argentine Diary* as a valuable source, Alexander, *Perón Era*, 225.
23. George I. Blanksten, *Perón's Argentina* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1953), 227-28; Arthur P. Whitaker, *Argentina* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 149.
24. M. Senderey, "South America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 50* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949); Abraham Mibashan, "Argentina," in *American Jewish Yearbook 51* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1950).
25. *New York Times*, 14 December 1947, 16.
26. David Ben-Mordechay Bligh, "Argentine Jewry Today," *The Jewish Horizon* 18, no. 6 (February 1956): 10.
27. Félix Luna's several works on Perón are indicative of this. See for example Félix Luna, *El 45: Crónica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1972).
28. See Sebreli's selection of quotations from Domingo Sarmiento in Juan José Sebreli, *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 50-60; from Juan B. Justo in Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 86-90; see also Sebreli's own essay in Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 223-34.
29. *Ibid.*, 238-39.
30. *Ibid.*, 253.
31. See Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part I, 156; on Sebreli's present relationship to Peronism see Juan José Sebreli, *Los deseos imaginarios del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1992).
32. Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 253-55.
33. Emilio J. Corbière, "Perón y los Judíos," *Todo es Historia*, June 1988. Corbière overutilizes Sebreli, often quoting directly from the latter without any acknowledgement. It must also be noted that the magazine *Todo es Historia* seems to have acquired the Peronist leanings of its founder Félix Luna.
34. Corbière, "Perón y los judíos," 7,8,10,18.
35. *Ibid.*, 12.
36. *Ibid.*, 15-16; though this originates with Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 239.
37. Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 237.
38. *Ibid.*, 239; Corbière, "Perón y los judíos," 15-16.
39. Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires: DAIA, 1954), 8.
40. "DAIA: Medio siglo de lucha por una Argentina sin discriminaciones," supplement to *Todo es Historia*, October 1985, 10.



41. K. J. Riegner, "Argentina's Jewry Under Perón," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 5-6 (September - December 1955): 51.
42. Victor A. Mirelman, "Attitudes towards Jews in Argentina," *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (summer/fall 1975):218. The same author does not discuss Perón in his impressive monograph *Jewish Buenos Aires*, which concludes its study in 1930. Bernard Ansel has written on the 19th century history of Argentina's Jewish community. Ansel, "Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community."
43. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part I (1971), Part II (1971-72), Part III (1972-73).
44. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part I, 157.
45. *Ibid.*, 152.
46. Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, trans. Gila Brand (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 194, chap. 6 passim.
47. For a treatment of Jewish immigration during the Holocaust period see Leonardo Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy During the Holocaust (1938-1945)," reprint from *Yad Vashem Studies* 21 (1991); and Leonardo Senkman, *Argentina, la segunda guerra mundial y los refugiados indeseables, 1933-1945* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991).
48. See Leonardo Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración durante el primer peronismo," *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 3, no.2 (1992).
49. See Leonardo Senkman, "Las relaciones EE.UU.-Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de la post-guerra: 1945-1948," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988).
50. Some details for the Holocaust period are offered in Haim Avni, "Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust," in *Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era: Patterns of Behaviour in the Free World*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (New York: Institute for Holocaust Studies of the City University of New York, 1985), 121-25.
51. Leonardo Senkman, "El 4 de junio de 1943 y los judíos," *Todo es Historia* 35, no. 193 (June 1983).
52. On criticism from within Argentina see Sebreli, *La cuestión judía*, 239; on U.S. criticism see Blanksten, *Perón's Argentina*, 68.
53. Partial analysis is also given in Klich, "Background to Perón's Discovery."
54. *Ibid.*, 212-13.
55. Klich has also detailed Perón's Palestine policy and diplomatic contact with the young Israeli state. In addition to "Background," see Ignacio Klich, "Argentina, the Arab World and the Partition of Palestine," offprint from proceedings of the *Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986).
56. Gino Germani, "Antisemitismo ideológico y antisemitismo tradicional," in *La cuestión judía en la Argentina*, ed. Juan José Sebreli (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 187-88.
57. *Ibid.*, 190.

58. Waisman, "Ideología del nacionalismo," 226-27.

59. Ibid., 209, 216-21.

60. Leonardo Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí en Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954)," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales II* (Jerusalem: Editorial Universitaria Magnes, Universidad Hebrea, 1993).

61. For evidence of the amount of material on earlier periods of Jewish settlement in Argentina consult the bibliography in Elkin, *Jews of the Latin American Republics*, 269-91; for an account of a more recent period of crisis for the Jewish collectivity see Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, trans. Toby Talbot (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).

62. The community's leadership *did* seriously compromise itself during the *Guerra Sucia*. The DAIA is harshly criticized for its (in)action during this period in Ignacio Klich, "Política comunitaria durante el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989).

63. On demographic decline see DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends," 86, 98-100, 126-33; regarding a more "spiritual" decline within the collectivity see Elkin, *Jews of the Latin American Republics*, 210-213, 235-37, 252-53.

64. See *Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), 27 July 1995, 27. Though arrests have recently been made in relation to the bombing, Jewish community leaders remain "guarded" in their optimism. *CNN World News*, Worldwide Web online "World News Briefs," 2 December 1995.

## Notes to Chapter Two

1. Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945: Yrigoyen to Perón* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 182-4, 192-3.

2. Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 298-9.

3. Ibid., 298-300.

4. David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 135; Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 184, 203-7; Newton, *Nazi Menace*, 299.

5. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 221-2; Newton, *Nazi Menace*, 298-300.

6. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 184; Newton, *Nazi Menace*, 299; Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, xx.

7. Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 55; Sandra McGee Deutsch, "The Argentine Right and the Jews, 1919-1933," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 18:1 (May 1986): 116-7. Besides Rock's monograph, other important works on Argentine Nationalism are: Cristián Buchrucker, *Nacionalism y peronismo: La Argentina en la crisis ideológica mundial (1927-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1987); Marysa Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas*

(Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Alvarez, 1968); Enrique Zuleta Alvarez, *El nacionalismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Bastilla, 1975); and the collection Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1993).

8. Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 64-5; Deutsch, "Argentine Right," 117-8.

9. Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 104.

10. Ronald H. Dolkart, "The Right in the Década Infame, 1930-1943," in *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present*, ed. Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1993), 79-80; Newton, *Nazi Menace*, 132-33. A succinct discussion of Nationalist antisemitism is given in Natan Lerner, "Anti-Semitism and the Nationalist Ideology in Argentina," *Dispersion and Unity* 17/18 (1973): 131-8.

11. The proclamation which announced the new government was drawn up by the GOU and contained unmistakable elements of traditional Nationalist rhetoric. See Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 134-5.

12. *Mundo Israelita* (Buenos Aires), 26 June 1943, 40.

13. Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns," Part II *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971-72): 163.

14. Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), *Que es la DAIA*. (Buenos Aires: Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, 1971), 7.

15. *Mundo Israelita*, 26 June 1943, 40.

16. *Mundo Israelita*, 17 July 1943, 1.

17. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 209, 217-19.

18. *Ibid.*, 224-25.

19. *Mundo Israelita*, 23 October 1943, 4.

20. *Mundo Israelita*, 13 November 1943, 3.

21. For various descriptions of Roosevelt's involvement in the affair see Louis Shub, "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 46* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1944), 293; Leonardo Senkman, "El 4 de junio de 1943 y los judíos," *Todo es Historia* 35, no. 193 (June 1983): 70; Juan José Sebreli, *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 19-20. On the denial by the Argentine government that pressure by Roosevelt led to the repeal of the decree see *New York Times*, 17 October 1943, 41.

22. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 July 1944, 3.

23. The matter of the Jewish teachers in Entre Ríos is discussed in *Mundo Israelita*, 9 September 1944, 3; 16 September 1944, 3; 18 November 1944, 3. Entre Ríos, with its large population of Jewish agricultural colonists, was fertile ground for anti-Jewish activity: in April 1944 the federal interventor in the province, Colonel Ernesto Ramírez, tried to press the tax-exempt Jewish Colonization Association into paying 10.5 million pesos in back taxes. See Newton, *Nazi Menace*, 372; and *New York Times*, 14 April 1944, 7.

24. *Mundo Israelita*, 31 March 1945, 3.
25. *Mundo Israelita*, 19 May 1945, 9.
26. Dealing with matters as they arose would also be a typical community response when confronting antisemitism in the 1960s. Mauricio J. Dulfano, "Antisemitism in Argentina: Patterns of Jewish Adaptation," *Jewish Social Studies* 31 (April 1969): 131.
27. See Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 224-26; and Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y Peronismo*, 281.
28. Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo*, 289. The antisemitic Zuviría's departure from the cabinet had preceded that of Perlinger, Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 246.
29. *Mundo Israelita*, 27 October 1945, 2. It is interesting to note that the antisemitic aspects of 17 October are not mentioned in accounts in Félix Luna, *El 45: Crónica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1972); nor in Hugo Gambini, *El 17 de octubre de 1945* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Brújula, 1969).
30. Senkman, "El 4 de junio," 74.
31. *Mundo Israelita*, 27 October 1945, 2.
32. *Ibid.*, 3.
33. Alberto Ciria, *Parties and Power in Modern Argentina, 1930-1946*, trans. Carlos A. Astiz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 106; and Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962: Perón to Frondizi* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 27.
34. Department of State, *Blue Book on Argentina: Consultation among the American Republics with respect to the Argentine Situation* (New York: Greenberg Publisher, 1946), 58.
35. Callum A. MacDonald, "The Braden Campaign and Anglo-American Relations in Argentina, 1945-6," in *Argentina Between the Great Powers, 1939-46*, ed. Guido di Tella and D. Cameron Watt (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 150.
36. Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas*, 193.
37. Maintaining an apolitical stance was a fundamental tenet of the DAIA. See DAIA, "Que es la DAIA," 7.
38. *Mundo Israelita*, 19 January 1946, 3.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Mundo Israelita*, 24 November 1945, 3.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 December 1945, 3.
43. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 17 November 1945, 10.
44. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 December 1945, 3.

45. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 December 1945, 7.
46. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1928-1945*, 185.
47. *Ibid.*, 272; and Ciria, *Parties and Power*, 92, 95-96.
48. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 December 1945, 8.
49. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 21, 50, 54.
50. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 December 1945, 7.
51. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 21.
52. *Mundo Israelita*, 22 December 1945, 2.
53. *Mundo Israelita*, 19 January 1946, 3.
54. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 27-28.
55. *Mundo Israelita*, 5 January 1946, 3.
56. *Mundo Israelita*, 2 February 1946, 3.
57. Senkman, "El 4 de junio," 77.
58. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 1.
59. Ciria, *Parties and Power*, 109.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Mundo Israelita*, 30 March 1946, 3.
62. *Mundo Israelita*, 6 April 1946, 3.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Lerner, "Anti-Semitism and the Nationalist Ideology," 131-38.
65. Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo*, 111-12, 128.
66. *Ibid.*, 145-50.
67. *Ibid.*, 116, 209-10.
68. *Ibid.*, 111-13.
69. *Ibid.*, 308-10.

70. *Ibid.*, 214; also see [Maurice Halperin and Woodrow Wilson Borah], "Anti-Semitism in Latin America," available in U.S. National Archives, RG 59, OSS R & A Report 1590, "Latin American Nationalism," 15 August 1944, 42.
71. Richard J. Walter, "The Right and the Peronists, 1943-1955," in *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present*, ed. Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1993), 100.
72. See for example Walter, "The Right and the Peronists," 99 *passim*; and Félix Luna, *El 45: Crónica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1972), 15-17.
73. Ray Josephs, "Don't Cheer for Perón," *National Jewish Monthly*, November 1946, 88.
74. The hospital incident is detailed in *Mundo Israelita*, 27 July 1946, 3; and *Mundo Israelita*, 3 August 1946, 3.
75. *Mundo Israelita*, 10 August 1946, 3.
76. *Mundo Israelita*, 3 October 1946, 1.
77. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 12 October 1946, 7.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Troise proved rather lucky. In late 1947 Perón's Supreme Court ruled in his favour, upholding a previous decision which prevented him being stripped of his Argentine citizenship. (An Italian immigrant, Troise had become a naturalized Argentine in 1925.) The court found "no concrete evidence that Señor Troise sought to undermine the republic." *New York Times*, 27 December 1947, 8.
80. Moshé A. Tov, *El murmullo de Israel: Historial diplomático* (Jerusalem: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983), 77-78.
81. *Mundo Israelita*, 9 November 1946, 12. The cordial atmosphere is also confirmed in S. Weill, "Audience du president de la republique," 6 November 1946, letter to Jewish Colonization Association office in Paris from its Buenos Aires representative, Public Record Office, London, Reference F0371/51808 11747.
82. S. Weill, "Audience du president."
83. *Mundo Israelita*, 28 December 1946, 6.
84. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 February 1947, 4.
85. *Mundo Israelita*, 22 March 1947, 2.
86. *Mundo Israelita*, 19 April 1947, 7.
87. *Ibid.*
88. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 50.
89. Velazco was part of a group of officers who had levelled charges of corruption against members of Perón's cabinet including Eva; see Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 54. Bernardo Rabinovitz, in his anti-

Peronist tract, links Velazco's dismissal to the crisis brought on in the capital by Buenos Aires' striking street cleaners. Bernardo Rabinovitz, *Sucedió en la Argentina (1943-1956) Lo que no se dijo* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Gure, 1956), 88-89.

90. Potash, *The Army and Politics, 1945-1962*, 78.

91. Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988), 192.

92. Juan Archibaldo Lanús, *De Chapultepec al Beagle: Política exterior argentina, 1945-1980* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1984), 26; on the U.S. side, Senator Owen Brewster blamed Braden for the "ineptness" which had characterized United States policy toward Argentina.

93. *New York Times*, 22 August 1946, 11.

94. Klich, "A Background," 207-08 passim.

95. Klich, "A Background," 212-13.

96. Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 360-72.

97. *New York Times*, 22 August 1946, 11; *New York Times*, 4 June 1947, 1, 14; *New York Times* 5 June 1947, 1; *New York Times*, 6 June 1947, 8; see also Lanús, *De Chapultepec*, 40. Messersmith's departure caused deep distress in some government circles, see *New York Times* 7 June 1947, 8; before the month was out Perón had decorated him with the Order of the Grand Cross of the Liberator General José San Martín, *New York Times*, 19 June 1947, 18.

98. Klich, "A Background," 197.

99. *Mundo Israelita*, 21 June 1947, 8.

100. *Ibid.*, 3.

101. *Mundo Israelita*, 2 August 1947, 3.

102. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 November 1947, 8.

103. On Goldman's good relations with Perón see Tov, *El murmullo*, 78; Benno Weiser Varon, *Professions of a Lucky Jew* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1992), 133; and Silvia Schenkolewski (Tractinsky), "Cambios en la relación de la Organización Sionista Mundial hacia la comunidad judía y el movimiento sionista en la Argentina, hasta 1948," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988), 161.

104. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 November 1947, 3.

105. Elsie F. Zala, "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 49* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 266.

106. M. Senderey, "South America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 50* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), 269.

107. Benno Weiser, "Latin America," in *American Jewish Yearbook 54* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1953), 202.

108. Weiser Varon, *Professions*, 208.

109. Guillermo Patricio Kelly, *Kelly cuenta todo*, interview by Horacio de Dios (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 1984), 12.

110. *Ibid.*, 21.

111. Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas*, 203.

112. Somewhat suprisingly, Argentine Nationalist ideology in the 1970s was particularly soft, at times even respectful, of the State of Israel. Propaganda aimed at the Left described Israel as a "*teocrática, militarista y expansionista*" state--just the sort of state the Nationalists wanted Argentina to be. Carlos H. Waisman, "La ideología del nacionalismo de derecha en la Argentina: El capitalismo, el socialismo y los judíos," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* ed., Leonardo Senkman, 2d. ed. (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 219-20. The 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, in which some local complicity has been alleged, suggests a change in this conception; a blurred distinction between the local Jewish community and the Israeli state is also evident in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA building on Calle Pasteur which was likely linked to events in the Middle East.

113. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," 192-200.

114. See, for example, Dulfano, "Antisemitism in Argentina"; and Leonardo Senkman, "El antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias democráticas: Argentina 1959/1966 y 1973/1976," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989).

115. See Ignacio Klich, "Política comunitaria durante las juntas militares argentinas: La DAIA durante el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional," and Javier Simonovich, "Desaparecidos y antisemitismo en la Argentina, 1976/1983: Las respuestas de la comunidad judía," both in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989).

### Notes to Chapter Three

1. Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, trans. Gila Brand (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 158-59.

2. Leonardo Senkman, "El 4 de junio de 1943 y los judíos," *Todo es Historia* 35, no. 193 (June 1983): 73; Leonardo Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust (1938-1945)," reprint from *Yad Vashem Studies* 21 (1991): 174.

3. See Mark Wischnitzer, *To Dwell In Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), 82-93 which especially deals with Jewish agricultural settlement in Argentina; for a more general discussion see Victor A. Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930: In Search of an Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1990), 19-32.



4. Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), 132-33, Chapter 6 passim.
5. Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 129-41; Leonardo Senkman, *Argentina, la segunda guerra mundial y los refugiados indeseables, 1933-1945* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991), 118-121.
6. Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust," 160-61.
7. Ibid., 162-63.
8. Ibid., 156.
9. Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 160.
10. Senkman, "El 4 de junio," 73.
11. *Mundo Israelita* (Buenos Aires), 4 September 1943, 15.
12. *Mundo Israelita*, 13 November 1943, 10.
13. Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust," 177.
14. Ibid., 165.
15. See *Mundo Israelita's* response to *La Prensa* in *Mundo Israelita*, 27 November 1943, 3.
16. *Mundo Israelita*, 25 December 1943, 12.
17. Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust," 178-79.
18. The DAIA asked for an extension of the initial decree in a 28 June 1945 letter to President Farrell. *Mundo Israelita*, 30 June 1945, 6. The Jewish body again asked President Perón for an extension of the decree at a meeting of 5 November 1946 when the president turned the matter over to his Foreign Minister Juan Bramuglia. *Mundo Israelita* 9 November 1946, 12. Bramuglia continued to lead on the Jewish leadership in a January 1947 meeting, *Mundo Israelita*, 18 January 1947, 7.
19. Memorandum from Mr. Griffiths to Mr. Reed identified as Enclosure no. 1 to despatch 14547 from U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, 19 April 1944.
20. Senkman, "El 4 de junio," 74.
21. *Jüdische Wochenschau* (Buenos Aires), 2 April 1945, 1,8.
22. See Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 156-79.
23. *Mundo Israelita*, 23 June 1945, 6; a less detailed account of the meeting appears in *Jüdische Wochenschau*, 19 June 1945, 7.

24. For details of events see *Jüdische Wochenschau*, 24 July 1945, 8; *Jüdische Wochenschau* 27 July 1945, 5; *Jüdische Wochenschau* 31 July 1945, 2; *Jüdische Wochenschau* 10 August 1945, 16; *Jüdische Wochenschau* 4 January 1946, 5.
25. *Mundo Israelita*, 23 March 1946, 2; *Jüdische Wochenschau*, 22 March 1946, 5.
26. *Mundo Israelita*, 28 December 1946, 6.
27. Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust," 188.
28. Quoted in Leonardo Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración durante el primer peronismo," *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 3, no.2 (1992): 10.
29. Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 9-10; Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 179-81.
30. Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 181; *New York Times*, 15 August 1946, 1,9; *New York Times*, 16 August 1946, 8; an editorial critical of Peralta appears in *New York Times*, 16 August 1946, 20; Ray Josephs, "Don't Cheer for Perón," *National Jewish Monthly*, November 1946, 88-89.
31. *Mundo Israelita*, 19 January 1946, 5.
32. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 June 1946, 2.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Mundo Israelita*, 15 June 1946, 2.
35. *Mundo Israelita*, 29 June 1946, 2.
36. *Mundo Israelita*, 27 July 1946, 2; *New York Times*, 17 August 1946, 6.
37. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 February 1947, 3.
38. S. Weill, "Audience du president de la republique," 6 November 1946, letter to Jewish Colonization Association office in Paris from its Buenos Aires representative, Public Record Office, London, Reference F0371/51808 11747.
39. *Mundo Israelita*, 15 February 1947, 6; *Mundo Israelita* 22 February 1947, 2.
40. *Mundo Israelita*, 22 February 1947, 3.
41. See *ibid.*, 1.
42. *Mundo Israelita*, 29 March 1947, 3.
43. *Mundo Israelita*, 14 June 1947, 3.
44. See Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 9.
45. *Ibid.*, 28.

46. Ibid., 8.
47. Ibid., 18-19.
48. Ibid., 28-32.
49. While refraining from direct criticism of Perón, an editorial in *Jüdische Wochenschau*, 21 February 1947, 1, does indeed contrast the much-appreciated gesture with a general immigration policy which hindered the entrance of Jews.
50. *Mundo Israelita*, 26 June 1948, 3, 7.
51. See the DAIA's advertisement in *Mundo Israelita*, 21 August 1948, 5.
52. *Mundo Israelita*, 6 November 1948, 8.
53. Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 29-30; Senkman's chronology contradicts that of Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 189, but I will follow the former's as certain of Avni's assertions lack citations and cannot be corroborated.
54. Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 30.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. In February 1947 the German Jewish newspaper *Jüdische Wochenschau* delicately criticized local Jewish organizations for their failure to change immigration policy. *Jüdische Wochenschau*, 21 February 1947, 1.
58. Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 29.
59. See Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 189; and Senkman, "Etnicidad e inmigración," 29-30.
60. See *Mundo Israelita*, 26 June 1948, 3, 7, 9.
61. Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 126-27.
62. Ibid., 146-47.
63. Ibid., 156.
64. In June 1946 *Mundo Israelita* tried to argue that industrialization was more important than increased agricultural production and that Argentina needed intellectual workers as well as labourers. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 June 1946, 2.
65. Juan Archibaldo Lanús pinpoints the end of 1949 as marking a conclusion to the variety of discriminatory practices the U.S. had exercised against Argentina. Juan Archibaldo Lanús, *De Chapultepec al Beagle: Política exterior argentina, 1945-1980* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1984), 31-32.
66. Leonardo Senkman, "Las relaciones EE.UU.-Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de la post-guerra: 1945-1948," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988), 90.

67. See Zvi Zinger (Yaron), "State of Israel (1948-72)," in *Immigration and Settlement in Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1973), 50-51.

68. Information stated by Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 208.

69. Ibid., 208-210; see also Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, ed. Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 120-21. To gauge the large proportion of Argentine Jews immigrating to Israel in comparison with those of other western hemisphere and western European countries see Zinger, "State of Israel," 54-55, 64. On Latin American immigrants to Israel see Donald L. Herman, *The Latin-American Community of Israel* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984).

70. Brazil, the other large immigrant nation, may be the exception. Though the most comprehensive study of Jewish immigration to Brazil does not examine the postwar period, it does report that in 1946 and 1947 more than 10% of all immigrants to Brazil were Jewish--this represented some 4,500 people. See Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 171.

71. Allan A. Ryan, Jr., *Quiet Neighbours: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 15-28.

72. Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982), x.

73. Ibid., 7-9.

74. Ibid., 238-79.

75. Quoted in Reg Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy Since Confederation* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 14.

76. Ibid., 282-84.

## Notes to Chapter Four

1. For a discussion of the populist aspects of Peronism see Alberto Ciria, *Perón y el justicialismo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 1971), 20-27.

2. Ibid., 44-45.

3. Ibid., 46-48.

4. Joel Horowitz, *Argentine Unions, the State and the Rise of Perón, 1930-1945* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1990), 180.

5. Ibid., 185.

6. Ibid., 191-97.

7. Ibid., 212-15.

8. Ibid., 228.
9. Ibid., 226; Ciria, *Perón y el justicialismo*, 46.
10. Horowitz, *Argentine Unions*, 226-28.
11. George I. Blanksten, *Perón's Argentina* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1953), 190-97.
12. Richard J. Walter, *Student Politics in Argentina: The University Reform and Its Effects, 1918-1964* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 136.
13. Blanksten, *Perón's Argentina*, 196-97; Walter, *Student Politics*, 137-38.
14. Blanksten, *Perón's Argentina*, 190-91.
15. Boleslao Lewin, *La colectividad judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Alzamor Editores, 1974), 197.
16. Leonardo Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí en Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954)," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios históricos-sociales II* (Jerusalem: Editorial Universitaria Magnes, Universidad Hebrea, 1993), 115.
17. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 22 February 1947, 1.
18. Quoted in *ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Mundo Israelita*, 8 March 1947, 4.
22. See the OIA advertisement in *Mundo Israelita*, 11 October 1947, 5.
23. This is certainly the impression given in *Mundo Israelita*, 26 June 1948, 3, 7, 9.
24. The only Jewish sectors which have not chosen to be represented by the DAIA are the Jewish Communists and the American Jewish Committee's Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información: Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns," Part II, *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971-72): 171-72.
25. *Mundo Israelita*, 14 August 1948, 3.
26. From the DAIA advertisement in *Mundo Israelita*, 21 August 1948, 5.
27. From *ibid.*
28. Juan D. Perón, *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires: Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas [DAIA], 1954), 15.
29. *Ibid.*

30. Ibid.
31. *Mundo Israelita*, 29 August 1948, 3.
32. Ibid.
33. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 19 March 1949, 2.
34. Quoted in *ibid.*, 9.
35. Quoted in *ibid.*, 9.
36. Quoted in *ibid.*, 9.
37. Quoted in *ibid.*, 2.
38. See *Mundo Israelita*, 5 March 1949, 2; *Mundo Israelita*, 12 March 1949, 4; *Mundo Israelita*, 19 March 1949, 2, 3, 9.
39. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 19 March 1949, 2.
40. Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación," 118-19.
41. Ignacio Klich, "Argentina, the Arab World, and the Partition of Palestine," offprint from proceedings of the *Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 276-77.
42. Edy Kaufman, Yoram Shapira, and Joel Barromi, *Israel-Latin American Relations* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), 17-18.
43. Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 531-32.
44. *Ibid.*, 533-34.
45. *Ibid.*, 533-36.
46. Quoted in *Mundo Israelita*, 16 October 1948, 5.
47. From *Mundo Israelita*, 2 October 1948, 2.
48. See the DAIA advertisement in *Mundo Israelita*, 30 October 1948, 2.
49. See the Instituto's advertisement in *Mundo Israelita*, 6 November 1948, 6.
50. *Mundo Israelita*, 6 November 1948, 3.
51. Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns," Part III, *Dispersion and Unity* 15 (1972-73): 203-4.
52. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part II, 172-73.

53. OIA success in winning the Jewish vote for Perón in March 1948 was certainly not made easy by the presence of the openly antisemitic, ultranationalist priest Virgilio Filippo as one of the Peronist candidates for national deputy. Yet in the December 1948 elections for constitutional reform, when the antisemitic sentiment of candidates was not an issue, Peronist candidates lost most notably in electoral districts where the Jewish vote was most influential. In November 1951 even the OIA's own candidate, Dr. Ezequiel Zabolinsky, failed by some 6000 votes to win in his district of the federal capital. Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación," 116-18.
54. *Ibid.*, 118.
55. Moshé A. Tov, *El murmullo de Israel: Historial diplomático* (Jerusalem: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983), 79-86.
56. A similar conclusion is drawn in Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación," 132.
57. From the introduction to Perón, *El pensamiento*, 7.
58. Quoted in Alfredo José Schwarz, *Y a pesar de todo... Los judíos de habla alemana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991), 252.
59. Susi and Federico Stein (pseud.), interview by author, 30 November 1994, Buenos Aires.
60. Juan José Sebreli, *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 239-55; on the middle class nature of Jewish Argentina see Irving Louis Horowitz, "The Jewish Community of Buenos Aires," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 4 (1962): 156-57.
- 61: Susi and Federico Stein, interview.
62. This is a conservative estimate based on data provided in Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, trans. Gila Brand (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 170; and Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, ed. Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 94.
63. Schwarz, *Y a pesar de todo*, 256.
64. Quoted in Schwarz, *Y a pesar de todo*, 39; similar sentiments were expressed in my interview with Susi and Federico Stein.
65. Schwarz, *Y a pesar de todo*, 252.
66. Ciria, *Perón y el justicialismo*, 63.
67. *Ibid.*, 93-98.
68. *Ibid.*, 90-92, 99-100.
69. David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 164.
70. For a similar conclusion see K.J. Riegner, "Argentina's Jewry Under Perón," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 5-6 (September-December 1955): 51.

71. Avni, "Argentine Jewry," Part II, 192-94.
72. Perón, *El pensamiento*, 15.
73. Tov, *El murmullo de Israel*, 81-2.
74. See the brief biographical sketch of Goldman in *Mundo Israelita*, 15 December 1945, 2.
75. Lewin, *La colectividad judía*, 197-98. One Jewish visitor to Argentina wrote in 1952 that the "OIA is and is likely to remain a tiny minority of Argentine Jewry." Jack Winocour, "Report on Argentine Jewry," *Zionist Quarterly* (spring 1952): 17.
76. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist*, 536-37.
77. *Ibid.*, 537.
78. *Ibid.*, 545.
79. Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," in *Judaica latinoamericana: Estudios histórico-sociales* (Jerusalem: Universidad Hebrea, 1988), 201.
80. *Mundo Israelita*, 1 September 1945, 3.
81. See *Mundo Israelita*, 20 July 1946, 7.
82. *Mundo Israelita*, 20 November 1948, 1.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. Quoted in Schwarz, *Y a pesar de todo*, 233.
87. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 5-7.

## Notes to Chapter Five

1. See Leonardo Senkman, "El antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias democráticas: Argentina 1959/1966 y 1973/1976," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 19; and Victor A. Mirelman, "Attitudes Towards Jews in Argentina," *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (summer/fall 1975): 208-211.
2. See Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 17-18.
3. Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-political Status and Organizational Patterns," Part I, *Dispersion and Unity* 12 (1971): 157.



4. "DAIA: Medio siglo de lucha por una Argentina sin discriminaciones," supplement to *Todo es Historia*, October 1985, 14.
5. Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 41-42.
6. *Ibid.*, 44.
7. *Ibid.*, 51.
8. Quoted in *ibid.*, 52.
9. Gino Germani, "Antisemitismo ideológico y antisemitismo tradicional," in *La cuestión judía en la Argentina*, ed. Juan José Sebreli (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 190.
10. Quoted in Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 82; on the deterioration of the community because of increased antisemitism see also Mauricio J. Dulfano, "Antisemitism in Argentina: Patterns of Jewish Adaptation," *Jewish Social Studies* 31 (April 1969): 143.
11. Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 94.
12. *Ibid.*, 45.
13. *Ibid.*, 94-96.
14. *Ibid.*, 88.
15. See *ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 88-89.
17. "DAIA: Medio siglo," 16, 18.
18. Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 89-92.
19. *Ibid.*, 110-12.
20. *Ibid.*, 111.
21. *Ibid.*, 111-12.
22. Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 115-16; "DAIA: Medio siglo," 21-22.
23. Senkman, "Antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias," 138.
24. *Ibid.*, 123-24.
25. *Ibid.*, 122-25.
26. Ignacio Klich, "Política comunitaria durante las juntas militares argentinas: La DAIA durante el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 275-76.

27. Renata Charney (pseud.), interview by author, 30 March 1994, Vancouver. An Argentine Jew, Charney fled Argentina during the *Guerra Sucia*; see also Edy Kaufman and Beatriz Cymberknopf, "La dimensión judía en la represión durante el gobierno militar en la Argentina (1976/1983)," in *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 2d. ed., comp. Leonardo Senkman, (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 265; and Judith Laikin Elkin, "Living with Antisemitism: The Argentine Ambiente," unpublished paper, 5. A 1964 study of Argentine students showed stronger leftist attitudes in Jewish students than in non-Jewish ones. See David Schers and Hadassa Singer, "The Jewish Communities of Latin America: External and Internal Factors in their Development," *Jewish Social Studies* 39 (summer 1977): 258.
28. Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, trans. Toby Talbot (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 77.
29. *Ibid.*, 66.
30. Klich, "Política comunitaria," 299-300.
31. *Ibid.*, 302.
32. *Ibid.*, 301.
33. *Ibid.*, 284.
34. Elkin, "Living with Antisemitism," 6.
35. *Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), 27 July 1995, 23; "Deadliest Attack in Diaspora Since the Holocaust," *Response* 15:2 (summer 1994): 4-5.
36. *CNN World News*, Worldwide Web online "World News Briefs," 1 December 1995, 2 December 1995, 3 December 1995.

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